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ILLUSTRATED BY ROBT. A. GRAEF

PROLOGUE.

A T St. Rose's there was always excitement in the middle of the morning, when old Tim's crusty voice could be heard "whoaing" to Ginger, who, to tell the truth, needed no adjuration to stop, and when he, alighting from the covered wagon which plied between the academy and the town, stamped up the stone steps and into the waxed hardwood hall of the

building.

Tim was the one creature upon whom the sisters had never been able to enforce their rule of quiet; while acknowledging them his spiritual overseers next to Father Paul himself, he still maintained an independent spirit. He testified to his manhood by refusing to step softly, to speak gently to the ancient nag, or perceptibly to lower his voice in addressing Mother Veronica. Consequently, his advent with that of the morning mail was always known at St. Rose's to the uttermost classroom. And always a little flutter ran through the building, from rooms in which sat "the big girls," who would be "young ladies and out in the world" next year, down to those in which were the tiniest pupils. whose chubby cheeks had not yet lost the stain of tears over their separation from their home.

The fact that the mail would not be distributed until noon, when all classes were dismissed and the girls had half an hour in the gardens before dinner, was no preventive of excitement—rather a cause. There were thirty minutes of suppressed anticipation to be endured before they could file through the corridors and pause at Mother

Veronica's desk in her austere little office to receive the communications, the superscriptions of which her sharp eyes, behind their bone-bowed glasses, had already keenly noted. And woe to the girl—most likely of the graduating class, "next year to be a young lady and out in the world"—who received a letter with a superscription requiring explanation.

Kate Crossett was not one of these. She was only nine, and it would be at least eight years before the sisters at St. Rose's would put upon her the seal "finished" and send her forth. That she was excited about the reception of mail indicated chiefly that she had an inordinate capacity for excitement. In the two years in which she had dwelt at St. Rose's there had been but four handwritings directed to her-her mother's, fine, sloping, so sloping as to look almost running; her father's, bold and brilliant, with old-school tendency to shading and flourishing; the round, smeared chirography of the little girl who had been her bosom friend before St. Rose's immured her, and the terse, English, literary script of her present bosom friend, Allison Ware.

Allison Ware was twenty-three to Kate's nine, but she regarded him as quite the most satisfactory playmate of her experience. He kept his high place in her regard probably by the infrequency of his appearances. He had come three or four times with her father, and had captivated Kate's fancy.

To-day—three weeks before Christmas it was—Kate's hopes were dashed by the letters she received. There was one from her mother, still known on the stage by her maiden name of Dempsey—of "the" Dempseys, as one was always informed when reference was made to her, "the" Dempseys who had managed the Dublin Theatre, who had supported Kean and Garrick, and who had always been among the reliable

props of the British stage.

Mrs. Crossett, or Miss Dempsey, regretted in her hasty, eager handwriting that she was not going to be at St. Rose's for the Christmas play, on the twentieth, before the school adjourned for the holidays. She was sure that her darling would acquit herself with credit; and she could not tell her little daughter how sorry mother was not to see her first public appearance. Little daughter must remember to do exactly as Sister Mary Regina, stage manager for the academy performance, directed; she must also remember that it was a very high honor to be chosen to play the part of a herald angel, and she must strive to act with the sweetness and reverence that a herald angel would naturally feel. Poor mother's heart was fairly broken to think that she could not be with her precious pet for Christmas; some day there would be no more of these lonely, miserable holidays, but she and Kate would live together in a dear little house in the country, with a dear little pony in the stable stall, and dear little chickens in the poultry yard, and dear little roses climbing over the doors and windows, and they would be as happy as never was. And meantimethey would bear their separation bravely, and Kate must not sulk or feel neglected because she had to spend her Christmas vacation at the academy, and the writer was always Kate's devoted and loving mamma, with ten thousand kisses, Delia Dempsey Crossett.

This was the first of the letters which Kate had opened. She proceeded to pull a long face, in which was threatened an outbreak of tears before she looked at the others. Kate was wholeheartedly devoted to her mother, and had looked forward since September to having the Christmas holiday like the last Christmas holiday, with that dearly loved, satisfying companion, in all the half-awesome and half-lovely, altogether entrancing surroundings of a New York hotel.

"Oh, mamma can't come to our Bethlehem play, and can't have me for Christmas. She's out in Cleveland, and

has got to stay!"

The threatened tears began, but Sister Mary Regina, who had been watching the round, speaking, little face with sympathetic amusement, had a conciliatory suggestion.

"Why don't you read your other letters, Kate, my dear?" she remarked. "Maybe there will be something in them to help you bear your disappoint-

ment."

It was characteristic of Kate that she did not believe consolation possible at that moment. With her the instant was always eternal. She gave vent to this opinion by remarking: "I don't want anything but my mamma." But, having thus displayed her skepticism of substitute joys, she opened her father's letter, and her face grew brilliant with

delight immediately.

"Ōh, sister!" she cried rapturously. "Daddy's coming for the play! Daddy's going to take me for Christmas week"—she was reading, as hastily as a somewhat recent acquaintance with the art of chirography permitted, her father's epistle, and was declaring these things as she read—"to stay with him in New York! He says"—she stumbled along through Mortimer Crossett's heavy pages—"that mamma has kindly consented, and that he hopes to be able to win the consent of our kind teachers. Oh, sister, sister! Do you think Mother Veronica will let me go?"

"I think," replied Sister Mary Regina, concealing a sparkle in her young, gray eyes behind a pair of discreet, downcast lids, "that it will depend very largely upon your deportment and your standing in your studies during the rest of

the term."

"Oh, sister, I will be good! I will be just as good! And really I didn't mean to slap Henrietta that day when she cheated in parcheesi. My hand just went out before I knew what it was

going to do."

"Just as your tongue is now running on before you know what it is going to say." Sister Mary Regina's voice was a little stern, her eyes had lost their amused light. "Had you not promised not to refer to Henrietta's mistake again?"

"Oh, sister," wailed Kate Crossett, "I shan't ever speak again until I have counted thirty; that is, if I am in a good humor. When I am cross or angry, I will count sixty."

An admirable resolution," declared the sister, the corners of her mouth twitching again.

"And, now, do you think reverend mother will let me go?" Kate was balancing on one foot in her eagerness, and her eyes were bright and dark.

"Run along, Kate, run along. You'll get no air before your dinner if you stand here asking me questions about something that depends altogether on your own behavior. Run along, child; run along."

"Oh, sister," declared Kate fervently, hurling herself upon the sister, "I just love you. You're the sweetest thing!"

Sister Mary Regina could not refrain from giving her impetuous adorer a little hug and a little kiss, before she turned her shoulders around, and headed her for the door into the dismantled gardens, where the girls were running about in the bright December sunshine.

That afternoon, in consultation with her superior, she could not forbear giving voice to some doubts and mis-

givings that had assailed her.

"It is going to be a great responsibility, bringing up little Kate Crossett," she said. "Do you not feel it so, reverend mother? The child is so affectionate, so impulsive. It seems a dreadful thing that her parents could not have

given her the normal home life. She's the sort of child who needs it.'

"It is our mission to see that she suffers no ill from not having it," declared the mother superior.

"Yes, but that's the responsibility I spoke of. How people with a child like that could separate! It is incomprehensible to me."

"I hope," said Mother Veronica impressively, "that any divorce would seem equally incomprehensible to you,

daughter."

Sister Mary Regina was discreetly silent. Although she was not an elderly woman, she had not entered the order when she was a very young girl, nor had she been brought up in the conventual atmosphere; or, indeed, in the Roman faith. Some of the beliefs and prejudices of her earlier-less worthy days, Mother Veronica would have called them-still remained with her. But Mother Veronica was a disciplinarian who had no intention of allowing error to live in the midst of her community, even though it did not try to voice itself.

"I said," she repeated, with some emphasis, "that I hoped any divorce would seem equally incomprehensible to you,

my daughter."

She very obviously waited for a re-

"Divorce, yes," said Sister Mary Regina finally. "But I should be deceiving you, reverend mother, if I pretended to think that every reparation is unwarranted. And, after all, the Church, itself, does not deny relief of separation when conditions are impossible.

"But this affair of the Crossetts'," said Mother Veronica, steering away from the slightly dangerous topic of permissible separations, "is an affair of divorce. Mrs. Crossett, though I understand that she was born in the Church, has been so willful a daughter of it as to appeal to the civil courts to dissolve the indissoluble union."

"I did not know," murmurel Sister Mary Regina. "I thought they had merely separated."

"To be sure," admitted Mother Ve-



Delia Crossett quietly fainted against the back of her chair.

ronica handsomely, "I am not sure that she could be denied the rites of the Church on that account. The man whom she married—married in the civil sense, I mean—was already divorced from another woman. Consequently, of course, the Church would not recognize her marriage—Kate's mother—to him. Consequently, there having been no marriage, from the Church's point of view, there could be no divorce; and Mrs. Crossett, I suppose, would still be en-

titled to participate in the blessings of her

religion."

"In the world," observed Sister Mary Regina demurely, "I think that many women would forego the blessings of religion rather than admit themselves not to have been the legitimate wives of the fathers of their children."

"My daughter!"
Mother Veronica's
voice was almost the
voice of one about
to hurl "the dreadful
curse of Rome." But
she modified her rebuke of her younger
charge, recalling in
t i me the disadvantages under which one
so lately saved from
heresy had labored.

In theatrical circles they talked more freely of the affairs of Kate's father and mother than at the Every one school. knew Delia Dempsey when, some twelve years before, she had fallen victim to Mortimer Crossett's undeniable charms. Every one liked and respected Delia. was that rara avis. a

strictly virtuous woman who judged no other woman's virtue. The theatrical life which her family had lived for generations had given her a tolerance of other people's unconventionalities, unknown in any other profession. Her own native uprightness had kept her "straight" among all the temptations of her career. When she fell in love with Mortimer Crossett, she had had a real struggle with her conscience before permitting herself to marry him,

so keen was her sense of another

woman's rights in him.

But Mortimer had succeeded in explaining to her that early marriage of his as the chivalrous folly of a boy entrapped by a designing older woman—poor, maligned Mrs. Lee, keeper of the boarding house in Medena, where Mortimer Crossett once fell ill, and was left behind by his company, to be nursed back to health by his drab little landlady. She, poor soul, had felt that the gates of paradise opened before her when her handsome and winning young convalescent proposed to her.

Doubtless Mortimer had been right in calling the proposal the chivalric impulse of a boy, but never was human being less fitted, physically, mentally, or temperamentally, for the part of the elderly siren than Mrs. Lee. She had accepted him with adoring gratitude for his condescension. She had married him in a dream of humble happiness. She had been content to work for him, to wait on him, to slave for him. And when he finally regained strength to go back to his profession, she saw him depart with an aching premonition of final separation.

She had made no protest when he had begged her to divorce him. She had done as he asked as simply as if he had requested a favorite dish for dinner, or the readjustment of the read-

ing lamp.

It was hard that even for two or three years another woman should have thought of that humble, patient, deserted creature as Delia Dempsey thought of her. By the end of two or three years, Delia was much better able to interpret her husband's version of his first marriage than she had been during her brief engagement.

With all his charm, which even his enemies accorded to him; with all his wit, his good looks, his talent, Mortimer Crossett was a disappointment in every relation of life. Responsibility was something he could not understand, whether it was responsibility to a wife, a tailor, a manager, a playwright, or the public. Often, he only half learned his parts. He was

guilty of the crime of interpolation. He was late to rehearsals. He had been known to appear upon the stage, more than once, half intoxicated; and occasionally his understudies had reason to rejoice when intoxication, which even politeness could not describe as "semi," prevented his appearing at all. He lightheartedly contracted debt, and failed to

pay it.

He made love to every woman whom he met—some sort of love. To the elderly it was the gay flattery of a spoiled young son or nephew that he offered; to servants it was the kindly sympathy that recognized sex beneath the disfiguring envelopes of cap and apron; to women of his own age and class it was the spontaneous tribute of an attractive man who simply could not resist them. He was as outrageously faithless to Delia Dempsey as any of his friends could have warned her beforehand he was going to be.

And Delia, who was a passionate and proud woman, and who, through exacting years of a career that made constant demands upon her emotions, and that offered temptations to light loving at every turn, had kept herself as untarnished as any Puritan maid, had resented his insults to her as his wife

with a peculiar fervor.

At first she forgave his disloyalties, which began almost before their honeymoon was over, for the sake of the child that was coming. Surely, surely, fatherhood must make some noble impression upon that facile, but affectionate, nature. And after Kate was born, she forgave him again, for the familiar reasons which have made women bear misery since monogamy was instituted, "for the sake of the child."

But the time had come when outraged womanhood could bear no more, and then she had divorced him. Even then, she had been too generous to cut him off from all intercourse with his little daughter. Although the court had awarded her the sole custody of the child, she conveyed to her husband, through his lawyers, the information that she would never interfere with his seeing Kate at suitable times. And

Mortimer, who never lost the superficial manners of the gentleman, had replied to her kindness with an appreciative delicacy that made her cry for an afternoon, and had availed himself of her offer with the most forbearing infre-

quency.

During the child's babyhood, she had taken Kate with her everywhere. She paid Heaven knows what prices to procure nurses who were willing to travel wherever the chances and changes of theatrical life lead, and who were warranted to have no unconquerable aversion to one-night stands. Every minute that she could spare from the exacting requirements of her profession,

she spent with the baby.

She would have given anything never to have been separated from the little object of her passionate adoration. That she finally sent Kate to a school much patronized by theatrical people was proof of the sacrificing nature of her love for the child. She saw her own nomadic existence unsuited to the needs of a little girl. She was lonelier and more miserable the first night after she had left Kate at St. Rose's than she had been even the first day after she had ordered Mortimer Crossett out of her life forever.

The conduct of Miss Kate Crossett at St. Rose's Academy between the date on which she received her father's invitation to spend Christmas week with him in New York, and the date of the play in which she was to enact the part of a herald angel, was of that exemplary kind which is seen upon the earth only in the weeks immediately preceding

Christmas.

She had one disappointment in connection with the play. After all, her father was unable to be present at it. A telegram was received from him on the morning of the great day, regretting the impossibility of his reaching St. Rose's in time. Only the thought of the coming week made Kate able to endure that grief-that thought, and her tremendous interest in the part she was to play. Of all the children at St. Rose's, many of whom inherited histrionic talent, Kate was the most gifted.

After seeing her act, with self-forgetfulness and fire, Sister Mary Regina shook her head wisely to Mother Ve-

"I'd never give her another part,"

she observed sagely.
"And why not?" inquired the reverend mother, with some astonishment.

"I'd try to eradicate all that theatrical inheritance," replied Sister Mary Regina wisely. "I'd do nothing to fos-

ter it."

"Nonsense, my dear sister," replied the reverend mother, with some asperity. "Let every one improve the talent God has given him; only let it be to the glory of God and His Church."

"Oh, I know that St. Rose's entertainments and pageants are very superior to those of any other convent school," replied Sister Mary Regina

daringly.

She had the courage of a woman who had brought a good deal of money to the convent. But she had gone a little

too far this time.

"I do not allow any one to impugn my motives," declared the autocrat of St. Rose's, all the more autocratically because there had been a modicum of truth in the criticism which Sister Mary Regina implied. And she designated a punishment for the younger woman, who accepted it meekly, but remained firmly convinced both of the ill-advisedness of allowing Kate Crossett to act, and of Mother Veronica's real reason for failing to admit that ill-advisedness.

The holidays began the twenty-first. Kate, intoxicated through all her chubby little body by her success as a herald angel, condoled with the girls who were going to spend the holidays in the school, and packed her bag seven times in an hour. It was not a matter of great work to pack it, for costume at St. Rose's was strictly prescribed, and two winter frocks of dark-blue serge, with heavy ulsters to match, made according to a regulation pattern, comprised the winter wardrobe of the little girls, and even of the "young ladies." Of course, Mother Veronica could not oversee the attire of her charges when

they reëntered the bosoms of their families; but, while they were with her, all vanity and competition were sternly checked.

In the middle of the afternoon, Kate was sent for, to come to the office. She bounded down the uncarpeted stairs. and across the waxed halls, her heart beating high with anticipation. instead of the tall figure, beginning to verge on portliness, of her father; instead of his smiling brown eyes and handsome face, she saw only his friend, Mr. Allison Ware. Although Allison Ware was a favorite of Kate's, she had never regarded him in the light of a possible substitute for her father, and her face fell when she beheld him.

She looked at him questioningly, without greeting, and Mother Veronica was compelled to call her attention to her lapse in good manners. Thus rebuked, Kate dropped her pretty little convent curtsy, and murmured her salutations; and then she looked from one to the other of her seniors with eager

question in her eyes.

"I have here a note from your father, Kate," said Mother Veronica. "He is detained in New York, but he has sent his friend, this gentleman, whom you know, and whom we have had the pleasure of seeing before at St. Rose's, in company with your father, to bring you to him."

"Oh," said Kate shyly, and then anxiously: "Is daddy sick?"

"No," replied Mr. Ware reassuringly. "He is not sick, at all; but, as I have been explaining to the reverend mother, he is held up by rehearsals, and he sent me over to fetch you in place of himself. Will you come with me?"

"Yes," answered Kate.

"Yes, what?" suggested Mother Ve-

ronica, frowning.

"Yes, Mr. Ware," supplied Kate dutifully; and then she was dismissed to get her hat and ulster, and to start across the river with her guide.

Some misgiving seemed to cross Mother Veronica's mind as they were

departing.

"I shall expect a letter from you tomorrow morning, Kate, my dear," she said, "telling me exactly how you found

your father. The Holland House, you said, I believe?"

She turned to Mr. Ware. The young man smiled, and nodded boyishly. "That's where," he assured her. And

he and Kate started on their journey. As a matter of fact, Mr. Mortimer Crossett's failure to appear at the play the day before, and failure to call for his daughter this afternoon, were both due to the same cause. Mr. Mortimer Crossett was indulging in a periodic spree. He had stumbled upon his young friend, Ware, two nights before, and had wept maudlin tears upon that young man's coat sleeve, over the fact that his wife had left him, and that he was deprived of the comfort and society of his daughter. He assured Mr. Ware that he was going to pull himself together in time to attend the Christmas festival at the convent the next day. And he invited the young man to spend a week with him and Kate at the Holland House.

To Mr. Ware, at twenty-three, all this had seemed funny; but when he had repeated it to his sister, the mother of children of Kate's age, his point of view had been suddenly changed. He had been informed that it would be outrageous-vile-for Mr. Crossett to appear at St. Rose's Academy in the condition in which he was sure to be. He was informed that it would be terribly pathetic if the child did not have her

holiday.

He had been energetically constituted chief jailer and general guardian to Mr. Crossett. He had seen to the sending of the telegram on the morning of the play, and he had been sent after the little girl, who was nominally coming to visit her father, but who was, in reality, to spend most of her time with the kindly and energetic lady who was taking charge of her destiny.

To say that Kate had a satisfactory Christmas holiday would be to use a thin extract of milk and water of language in place of sparkling wine. Never had she known such complete joy. Mrs. Martin, Mr. Ware's sister, an English girl, whose husband was in charge of the New York end of his firm's busi-

ness, had brought to her new home all the British traditions of Yuletide, and the old-fashioned house in which she lived was paradise for the little girl

from the convent.

Her father recovered within a day or two, and appeared among the Martin young folks in his familiar character of complete charmer. There were stockings hung along the edge of the gueer, convoluted, white marble mantelpiece in Mrs. Martin's room; there was a big Christmas tree, which burst in radiant splendor upon dazzled young eves, from the dark corner of a room which had been mysteriously closed until Christmas morning; there were jests and favors for even the littlest child at the big table on Christmas day; there was a glorious sleighing party-snow having opportunely arrived for the sole purpose of making perfect Kate Crossett's holiday, as she believed-out into the suburbs, to an inn where every one had steaming hot glasses of something, the children, milk; there were theatre parties to real theatres, an intoxicating experience; there were amateur productions in the garret, in which Kate shone, both as manager and actress, thereby maintaining the proud tradition of her mother's family; there were children's dances at the home of some friends; there was, altogether, complete

Kate never had again, during her ildhood, so happy a holiday. The childhood, so happy a holiday. Martins moved back to England next year, and, after a little, the memory of their hospitable, wholesome gayety grew dim in her mind. She forgot their names, and had only a confused impression of chestnut curls and laughing, rosy faces. Mrs. Martin became a mere type of pleasing motherliness, losing all her individual traits, in recollection; but Allison Ware stood out in the midst of the pleasant confusion of ideas, the one clear-cut, compelling figure, to Kate's mind. She never forgot him, although she did not see him again. Absence for a time only gave him added luster in her imagination, made more graceful his slender, boyish figure; brighter his blue eyes, more infectious

his laugh, more compelling his merriment. For two or three years, Christmas holidays, even those spent with her mother, were measured by the Allison Ware standard, and fell short of what

holidays might be.

He wrote to her once or twice, shortly after her return to the convent, and she answered his letters with the most undiplomatic speed and fervor. She even wrote two or three after he had ceased to reply to hers. Then she relegated him to the mental region inhabited by King Arthur and Sir Launcelot, and wrote to him no more than to these other beloved heroes.

She did not talk to her mother about him, because, being a sensitive child, she had early gained the knowledge that her mother did not care to hear of those snatches of life which were lived with her father and her father's friends.

She did not talk to her father about him, because, except for the beautifully shaded letters, and the occasionally extravagant gifts, Mortimer Crossett dropped out of her life almost as completely as Allison Ware had done. He had gone to Australia on a tour, and had remained two or three years in the South Pacific; then he had made a flying visit to America, but had missed seeing Kate, who was in the mountains with her mother for the summer. Then he had gone to London, where he remained, writing less often to his daughter, and drifting toward that oblivion which is only one degree removed from the final oblivion.

CHAPTER I.

As Kate Crossett looked at the superscriptions on the letters handed her by the village postmaster, a shadow fell upon them. It was caused by the interposition between her and the sunlight at the door of a large masculine body. It was an interposition which was not unfamiliar to Miss Crossett and her neighbors, being the person of young Mr. Elliott Ames.

"Good morning," began Mr. Ames. "You are down for the mail?" Yet in some circle Mr. Ames had the reputation for original thought. Kate smiled, and did not make the unnecessary answer. "I don't seem to have anything, myself," he added, which wasn't strange, as Mr. Ames' groom had brought the mail to Mr. Ames' stone palace on the hill, two miles from the post office, some two hours earlier, "so, may I walk along with you, if I promise not to interrupt your reading?"

Kate slipped the mail into the bag that swung from her

arm.

"It's all for mother," she announced, "and it will be very pleasant of you to walk

along with me."

She spoke with a conscious attempt at the lightness which, she felt, ought to characterize all her intercourse with Mr. Elliott Ames; but she was not

entirely successful. It is difficult for a young lady of twenty to be completely airy in her manner when she has a burning recollection of a parting quite other than airy with the person whom she is addressing. Kate felt sure—in her pulses, if not in her mind—that she had ejected Mr. Ames from her mother's dwelling, two night before, only just in time to save him from some sort of declaration of his feelings. The emotion which had made his gray eyes black, which had made his face white, which had made his speech stammering and broken, had been unmistakable.

It was not experience of passion which had taught Kate the meaning of these phenomena; it was her own quickened breathing, her own failing vision, before which everything had faded except the white face and the dark eyes that glowed upon her, the thrill that had possessed her entire being for one

That she should have been able, in spite of the response of her own emotions, to effect a conventional leavetaking with him was a triumph to many things, perhaps chiefly to the teaching



It ended in her statement, in an icy voice, that she wished to leave him.

at St. Rose's Academy. And perhaps it was partly due to some caution in her blood, implanted there during the months when her mother had begun to question the wisdom of her own yielding to overmastering love.

At any rate, Kate had managed to effect a perfectly formal—or, at least, a sufficiently formal—farewell with her

neighbor two nights ago.

She was very glad of it now, as she stepped lightly along the village street with him by her side. In the first place, it would have been so embarrassing to meet him again, had there been any actual love scene between them that night; in the second place, the climax had not yet been reached; there was a delicious, breathless sense of anticipation of it, and Kate was enough of a natural artist in life to appreciate having her climaxes ahead of her.

In the third place—here common sense took its chilling part in the confused dialogue going on beneath Kate's pretty black hair—the thing had to end, anyway; it could be nothing more than a flirtation on Elliott Ames' part; the only sons and heirs of rich bankers

did not want to contract serious alliances with the penniless daughters of

divorced ex-actresses.

Besides, didn't he know all the girls in New York society-wonderful creatures, of a myriad accomplishments, of multitudinous possessions? Could he not find quite as much beauty, quite as much charm as she possessed, advantageously allied with stocks and bonds, and all sorts of pleasant things, in which she was conspicuously lacking?

The conversation between the two young persons, conducted as they walked along the village street, on the bright May morning, was singularly perfunctory. Mr. Ames inquired respectfully after Mrs. Crossett's health; Miss Crossett replied with proper expressions of gratitude for his interest, and then inquired concerning the health of Mr. Elliott Ames, Senior. Mr. Elliott Ames, Junior, reassured her as to his parent's physical well-being, and thanked her for her interest in the matter. He then asked if she had been to town since they last met, and, on hearing that she had not been, congratulated her upon having escaped a horrid bore.

"Oh, then you have been?" said Kate inadvertently.

Mr. Ames leaped upon the opening. "You know that I have been," he an-

swered. "You know that I could not have kept away from The Orchard, if I hadn't been in town."

Kate's heart executed a sort of somersault in her bosom; her blood sang through her veins; common sense sternly forbade her to pursue this line of conversation, but something infinitely stronger than common sense made her reply, with demure coquetry:

"I don't think I quite know that. Why

should I?"

"If you do not know already, I shall

have to teach you."

There was anticipatory triumph in Mr. Ames' voice. Kate raised her blackfringed blue eyes toward his face. It was alight and eager. His glance burned into hers.

"Oh, Kate," he began; but then his

voice broke, and he could go no far-

The Orchard, as Mrs. Crossett called the little place in which she had come to spend her last years, in the pastoral fashion she had outlined to Kate in their Christmas letter, eleven years before, and in many other letters and talks during the long time intervening, was at the edge of the village to which it belonged, socially, much more than it did to the many-acred, many-towered estates that lay beyond the village.

It was an old-fashioned place—an old Dutch stone cottage, with occasional ells of wood or brick, standing on a little terrace that was walled up from the road. About it lay lawns and flower beds, and behind it a half acre of orchards. Beyond them again were the chicken yards of Mrs. Crossett's old

ambition.

She had taken the place three years before, and had risked a considerable portion of her savings in the venture. If it was not quite as wildly successful, financially, as starring in popular plays, it satisfied the woman who had never been a star, and whose playing days were over.

It more than satisfied her; it was her dream come true. Here she had the gentle outdoor occupations that she loved, and here she had the daughter that she idolized-here, safely away from the glamour and the glitter of the

footlights.

If there was one thing upon which Delia Crossett was determined, it was that her daughter should never go on the stage; should never know the homelessness, the loneliness, which might drive her, in her turn, into the arms of a man as unfit to receive her as Mortimer Crossett himself. The old wound had never altogether healed with Delia.

As she saw, through the floweredmuslin curtain of the dining room, the approach of her daughter and her daughter's escort, she half frowned. Elliott Ames was exactly the sort of man she would have desired to see her daughter marry—he was the antithesis of Mortimer Crossett in every respect.

But she had a certain worldly wisdom, in spite of much sentiment, and she questioned whether a marriage would be pleasing to the Ameses, if it should come about.

In her eyes, Kate was the most beautiful, the most graceful, the most fascinating, and the most lovable of human beings. Still, she had moments of realizing that the whole world might not view Kate as she did. She would not have her darling an unwelcome bride in any house. It was the conflict of these thoughts that drove the little frown across her face as the two young people approached.

"Mumsey!" Kate's clear young voice rang through the little house. "Lots of letters for you. And Mr. Ames particularly wants to know how your

rheumatism is."

Mrs. Crossett came out of the dining room into the hall. She smiled upon the tall young man, as she took the mail bag from her daughter's hand. Kate abandoned her, and ran up the stairs.

"I'll be down in a few minutes," she

called.

She had a shy desire to defer the talk with Elliott which that lingering look between them in the street had prophesied as inevitable.

Mrs. Crossett invited the young man into the sitting room, and after she had made desultory conversation with him for a few minutes, she asked his per-

mission to look at her mail.

Elliott, whose every sense was alert upon the stairs and the door leading to them, readily granted it. He crossed the room to make a minute examination of some wood violets planted in a bowl on the table in the south bay window. He loosened the earth about their roots, and pulled off a yellowed leaf—he and Kate had dug them up a week before; he felt an absurd desire that they should show no sign of wilting.

And while he trifled with them, he heard a sudden moan, and, looking up, saw Delia Crossett quietly fainting against the back of her chair. He sprang to her, and dashed her face with water from a glass bowl that held arbutus, at the same time calling, "Kate, Kate!"

thrilled to his heart that he should be calling her thus intimately, even in this emergency.

Mortimer Crossett was dead. That was what one of the letters, at whose unfamiliar superscription Kate had stared inquisitively, in the post office, had told Mrs. Crossett; and all the old pain, and the old struggle, and the old desire to forgive, with a new sense of despair and loss, had started up in her in one spasm, and she had lost consciousness in the grip of it. Somehow, she had never thought of him as old or broken, and here these curt legal phrases told her that he had died, in an actors' home, where he had lived for two years before his death. Old and broken-that gay, magnetic, compelling presence! Dead-that man. whose living voice still lingered in her

When Kate and Elliott had restored her, and she had given the letter to Kate to read, and had said that she would like to go to her room for a little while, and be alone, the two young people, sobered and cooled by the epistle, sat down together in the little sitting

room.

Kate's mobile face was pale. Elliott thought it more beautiful in its color-lessness and sadness than even in its rosy gayety. She sat in a corner of the old davenport, and he in a low wicker chair drawn close before her. She was silent for a few minutes, and the ready tears swam in her blue eyes. She brushed them away, and looked at Elliott

"I do not remember him very clearly," she said, her soft lips quivering. "But what I do remember is something warm, and dear, and lovable. Yet I know that he was cruel to my mother, and that she suffered endlessly on his account. As a child, I could not help loving him. Now that I am a woman, and know how he made the best woman in all the world suffer, I—I cannot help loving him still," she ended, with a sudden burst of sobs, burying her head on the arm of the sofa.

Elliott leaned over, and touched the soft, wavy black hair tenderly.



Kate had repelled him with her look even before she spoke.

"I wish I could have kept this sorrow away from you," he said. "I wish I could keep every sorrow away from you forever, Kate."

His hand slipped to her shoulder. She sobbed quietly for a few minutes, and then raised her tear-stained face.

"Poor mother!" she said. "She has had such a bitter life—such work, and loneliness, and heartache."

"She has had you," said Mr. Ames loyally.

"If I only could make up to her for some of it!" sighed Kate piteously.

"Let me help you," broke in Elliott, with a return of the lover's eagerness of manner. "Let me help you. You don't know how much I admire her, how much I love her, how I want to do something for her."

The ghost of a smile appeared on Kate's down-drooping lips. A little, rosy flush of mischief ran over her face.

"Am I to understand that you are making me a proposal for my mother?" she asked.

But Mr. Ames was in no mood for playfulness.

"I am making you a proposal to give me the right to care for your mother as a son," he insisted seriously. "Oh, Kate, don't keep me waiting! I want the right to care for you, to cherish you, to keep you from everything harsh and cruel and disappointing in the world. I love you."

He was very much in earnest, very

sincere in his pleading.

"You might have mentioned that in the first place," said Miss Crossett de-

murely.

And, even in the rapturous moment when he gathered her into his arms, it occurred to Mr. Ames to wonder at the variety of changing emotion which his Heart's Desire could display within a given time.

CHAPTER II.

"So, you've resigned from your committee of the Woman's Civic League?"

It was not inquiry that Elliott's words expressed as he addressed his wife, though he used a slightly interrogative inflection. He was conveying the information that he knew of her act, and also that he disapproved of it.

"Yes. I really couldn't waste any more time at those foolish committee meetings. You've no idea the amount of nonsense that's talked to every word

of sense."

"Oh, yes, I have some idea," Mr. Ames dryly assured the sharer of his joys. "Masculine committee meetings are not always composed exclusively of statesmen. But I have always found it possible to work with my fellow men and my fellow politicians without being overcome with contempt for them and their methods. I am sorry that you thought it necessary to give up this work."

"Work!" Kate laughed. It was a

laugh of unmistakable scorn.

"Yes, work," repeated Elliott firmly. "We are living in a democracy, you remember, not in an oligarchy. The democracy is your committee meeting magnified many times—with the fools and the knaves, the dreamers and grafters, each having a voice. I am sorry that you see the thing as you do, Kate. I had hoped that you would take an interest in my career."

"But I do, dearest. I do, indeed. I want you to be President, if you want to be, and the hours I have spent in trying to understand the tariff are unnum-

bered. Truly, Elly-"

"I do wish, Kate," said Mr. Elliott Ames, frowning, "that you would not use that absurd diminutive. You have forgotten, several times, and have done it in public. Once let the paragraphers get hold of it, and I'm a laughingstock. Elly! How can a man be taken seriously who becomes known by a nickname like that?"

"I am sorry, Elliott," replied Kate, with an air of patient resignation. "I am very sorry"—with accentuated patience—"that I so constantly fail to

please you."

Mr. Ames, far from being mollified by this speech, which seemed to put him in the position of a carping and exigent

husband, reddened angrily.

"I had not thought that I made many demands, or even requests," he informed hs wife. "Of course, you knew when we were married that my chief interests were political."

"When we were married," answered

Kate, with the dreamy manner of one speaking of some long-past event, "I labored under the delusion that I was your chief interest. It was a pleasant

delusion-while it lasted."

"Of course you are my chief interest," said Elliott stiffly. "But New York is not Arcady, and a man has something else to do than to weave garlands for his beloved's hair. Kate, why can't you be reasonable? Why will you be so perverse? You would be the first person in the world to object, if I were constantly at your apron strings. There never was any one who would more quickly sicken of an exclusive diet of love-making than you. Why don't you do your share toward advancing my ambition? The influence of women is beginning to count in politics—that is, in reform politics—"

"I have darkly suspected that that is what is the matter with reform politics,"

interpolated Kate.

"Oh, if you despise your own sex!"

Elliott said.

He turned, as though to leave the room. They were in Kate's dressing room, in the town house. It was on Gramercy Park, and the window of her room commanded the sunny square, brilliant now with patches of late snow. But as he turned to leave, Kate had an impulse of relenting.

"Don't go off mad, Elly, darling-I mean Elliott, dear," she coaxed, with a child's inflections. "I don't mean to be exasperating. I am as proud of you as possible. But the trouble is I have no political intelligence. I can't pretend it, I can't assume it. And half of these women that you want me to work with have just as little as I; but, for one reason or another, they are willing to pretend. That's what bores me so unutterably in those committee meetings, which I have attended this winter. Of course, here and there one finds a woman who thinks, a woman who is really interested. But, for the most part, it You ought to have is just a pose. married one of these women who really understand what it is all about, and care what it is all about."

"As if you couldn' understand any-

thing you felt like putting your mind to," grumbled Mr. Ames, half admir-

ing, half condemning, his wife.

"But I told you I don't want to put my mind to it. It bores me. I don't care whether the streets are clean or dirty—much; I don't care how the tenements are built, personally. You ought to have married one of those rich girls who have been brought up to think that they owe a duty to the community, and love to meddle in all sorts of civic affairs. Though most of them do it because they want to feel important, and not because they are really interested," she added, as a graceful afterthought.

"Are you tired of our marriage, that you are so keen to suggest other wives

for me?"

"It is of your happiness and your weariness that I am thinking," replied

Kate virtuously.

"It must be your own weariness of the situation that puts the thought so constantly into your head," declared Mr. Ames.

Kate looked stubbornly out of the window at the bright park, and played automatically with the curtain cord.

"I am not tired of anything," she remarked, at last, "except your trying to make me over. The trouble is, Elliott, that I come of a family of lawless strollers—don't look politely horrified and protesting! Personally, I think there was a lot of sense in those old English ordinances that classed actors with vagabonds. Every now and then I feel such rebellion against the whole orderly system of conventional life. If only you would go gypsying with me, Elliott!"

"You knew you weren't marrying a gypsy," Elliott replied to her. "Exactly why you hoped that marriage would transform me into one, I fail

to see."

"Well, and you knew that you weren't marrying a solemn, responsible woman of affairs. I fail to understand, in my turn, why you expected marriage to transform me into one."

Having arrived at this deadlock in their intercourse, Mr. Ames stamped, with some noise, but with more dignity, from his wife's dressing room, descended the stairs, and announced, by the heavy reverberation of the closing hall door, that he had gone forth from the house.

Kate listened, shrugged her shoulders, pursed her lips, and pantomimically expressed the opinion that if that was the way he wished to act, of course she couldn't help it. The time had passed when a quarrel with her husband threw

her into tears.

They had been married less than two vears, and for at least one year such scenes had not been uncommon between them. When Mrs. Crossett so thankfully saw her daughter wed to a man who was the antithesis of her father, she did not take into consideration that fundamental differences of temperament between two natures sometimes lead to as great disaster as may be caused by the total weakness of one. She had rejoiced whole-heartedly in the affair, and the bitter day when all her early sorrows had been revived for her by the news of her husband's death was converted in her recollection to a day of thanksgiving, because it was the one which had assured her daughter's happier fate, as she thought.

A man of probity, a man of high ambitions, a man of grave responsibility, already shown, in spite of his youth, loved her daughter; he loved her in the way that Delia Crossett's sentimental soul applauded—without a single worldly consideration. The question of the girl's lack of fortune, of her lack of a presentable father, seemed not to occur to Elliott at all. He loved Kate for her beauty, her winsomeness, her gay, sweet

April moods.

When Mrs. Crossett had suggested the possibility that his father might not give entire approval to the marriage, Elliott Ames stared in surprise. He assured Delia that his father would demand nothing of a daughter-in-law except those virtues and graces which Kate possessed in such full measure. He implied that the elder Mr. Ames would, like himself, regard any other considerations as merely vulgar.

Whether he was right in his estimate

of his father's mind, or not, the elder Mr. Ames did not interpose any objection to the marriage, but, in quite the traditional way, fell a victim to the charms of his son's fiancée. If, in the bottom of his heart, Elliott Ames felt that both of them had behaved in rather a magnificent manner, no one could be churlish enough to deny him the pleasant thought.

And yet, here, in less than two years, the lovers were quarreling like any ordinary married pair, where the gentleman has not high-mindedly ignored sordid matters, and the lady has not brought gratitude, as well as love, to the

altar.

If Kate found committee meetings unendurable, she had one source of pleasure as incomprehensible to her husband as was her distaste for those solemn conclaves of earnest ladies. She belonged to a dramatic club. They had been married only a few months when a wealthy inhabitant of Huntoon's Point decided to give an entertainment for the benefit of an orphanage established in the hills back of the summer settlement. Elliott was rather pleased that his wife's talent was recognized, and that she was asked to take a leading part in the performance of a comedietta which the wealthy author of the colony -wealthy by inheritance, not by authorship-had written.

Kate was delighted. She liked the children in the orphanage, and she loved to act. She threw herself with fervor into her part, and made of her performance something really noteworthy.

Two days later the secretary of the Thalia Club, which, as everybody knows, is quite the most swagger of the amateur dramatic organizations in New York, wrote to her, craving her membership. Kate, at that time, was dutiful with that brand-new, shining dutifulness which wears off shortly after the honeymoon. She had asked Elliott's permission to join the club. And Elliott was indulgent with the young husband's untarnished indulgence of the same period. He assured her that he would rejoice to have her belong to anything that would give her so much amuse-

ment, and even went so far as to say how proud he should be when all the lesser stars of the Thalia Club paled their ineffectual fires before her splender.

But that had been in the early days. Now the club, and Kate's devotion to its affairs, had become a matter of con-

tention between them.

When her husband had left her in dudgeon, on the day of her resignation from the street-cleaning committee of the Women's Civic League, Kate solaced herself by going out to a French lesson. The Thalias were to give a little French play for the benefit of the Unto-the-least-of-these Settlement, and Kate was brushing up the French of St. Rose's.

Elliott objected to the French lessons and the French play with the whole-hearted zeal of a gentleman who has found that English, spoken firmly and loudly enough, will carry him through all foreign countries. It was, therefore, particularly pleasing to Kate to signalize their quarrel of that morning by taking

a French lesson.

They did not meet again that day. Elliott, as he had been at some pains to explain frequently, liked his wife to be at home at tea time, when he was likely to come up from the office where he played at being the partner of his father. Before the days of the bickerings over committees and comedies, Kate had been enthusiastically of Elliott's opinion, that the proper wifely afternoon attitude was one of welcoming expectation at her own hearth; and she would hurry home from her walk, or her shopping, or her visits, to be ready to receive him when he entered the house. But lately this custom had fallen into disuse.

To-day, Elliott, coming in at half-past four, had seen throughout the house the unmistakable, intangible marks of its mistress' absence, and had promptly determined that he would not be there when his tardy spouse returned. Accordingly, he went across the park to the

Players' Club.

Kate, hurrying home from French, a little late, and a little repentant, and in a mood to be softened and made up with, learned that Mr. Ames had been in, but had gone out again without saying when he would return. She knew that he was attending a political dinner that night; she thought that it would have been graceful in him, therefore, to have spent a little while with her in the earlier evening; she felt aggrieved that he had not done this.

She felt still more aggrieved when he telephoned from the club and demanded to have his evening clothes sent across, alleging that he would be having an important conference with a political ally until too late to permit him

to come home and dress.

He asked Kate politely, on the wire, if she had had a pleasant afternoon, and she had responded with exaggerated enjoyment. To his civil inquiries as to her plans for the evening, she returned somewhat vague answers. As a matter of fact, she was not going out, but it seemed somehow a confession of failure to admit as much.

It was Betty Pruett, a fellow member of the Thalia Club, who saved her from her lonely evening. Betty telephoned, just before seven, begging her to make one of a suddenly improvised

dinner.

"There's to be a new man here," Betty had excitedly said, "a playwright—Greaves has taken two plays of his, and he has promised to do a one act for the Thalias. Do say yes—and, of course, I hope Mr. Ames can come, too."

She finished with a flat inflection which showed exactly how earnestly she hoped for Elliott's presence.

Kate accepted gladly. It seemed to her a form of revenge upon her husband. He particularly disapproved of Betty, singling her out of all the detested T! alias for a special opprobrium. It was pleasant to defy him and his wishes thus, since he had no regard for hers. She dressed herself with great care, feeling that by doing especial honor to Betty's dinner and to the unknown playwright, and to everything connected with the Thalias, she was further asserting her independence.

She was looking very beautiful, indeed, as she came down the stairs of the Pruett house, and entered the drawing room, to find her vivacious hostess in eager conversation with a tall, lean, middle-aged man, with thick, grayish hair, and a boyish face. There was something familiar about him, although she could not tell what. But when Betty introduced them she understood.

"Mrs. Ames," caroled Betty, "I am so proud to have the honor of presenting you two to each other. Mrs. Ames, Mr. Ware, Mr. Allison Ware—the new Shakespeare, the new Sheridan! Mr. Ware, Mrs. Ames—our amateur Réserve.

iane "

Allison Ware smiled at the voluble introduction, and extended his hand to meet Kate's outstretched one. There came into his blue eyes, set now in a myriad of tiny tired lines, a puzzled look of half recognition. He was murmuring something about pleasure and honor, when Kate, her eyes dancing with fun, exclaimed:

"You never answered my last let-

ter!

Mr. Ware stared at her in entire astonishment. Then he rallied his forces. "You never wrote it," he declared,

with mock gravity.

"Oh, yes, I did—I wrote at least two of them, and you not only didn't answer, but you don't even remember me."

"Isn't it a joke?" inquired Mr. Ware. 'Have I really had the pleasure of meeting you before?"

"Don't you remember Kate Cros-

sett?" asked Kate.

"Kate Crossett! But are you—why, of course—of course Kate Crossett would grow up! But to grow up into

you-you!"

Mr. Ware's eyes expressed all the admiration which he gave Kate to understand was not to be spoken in our painfully inadequate language. At the back of her mind, through the joyousness of meeting with her old friend, through the pleased dramatic sense of a "situation," there ran another willful, happy thought:

"This makes me quits with Elliott!"

CHAPTER III.

Strained as the relations between Kate and Elliott were, it is doubtful if they would so soon have reached a crisis, had it not been for the one-act play which Allison Ware provided for the Thalias. It was very smart, very satirical, and very amusing. It was called the "Solon Junior," and it poked fun at a solemn young politician who had begun his career with the kindly intention of benefiting the human race.

It was produced, with Kate in the leading feminine rôle, the same winter that sa w Elliott's party grotesquely •defeated in Manhattan, although he himself managed to obtain the seat for which he was campaigning in the assembly. This was a piquant situation which the papers could not ignore when the Thalia Club's entertainment for the benefit of the Home for Crippled Children was given.

Before this time the Ameses had had many spats and many reconciliations. The restraint was wearing off the former conjugal ex-

on the former conjugal exercises, and the fiery tenderness was lessening in the latter. During one of their periods of amicability, Kate told her husband about the witty new play. Elliott had frowned, and asked her if she did not see the unsuitability of her acting in it. Kate had stared at him out of astonished blue eyes.

"But why? It is the sort of part I can play beautifully."

"You can play any part beautifully, my love," Elliott had responded hand-somely. "But don't you see that for the wife of a reform politician to take the leading part of a play satirizing reform politics is—well, scarcely a graceful tribute to her husband?"

"How perfectly, ridiculously self-



He patted her paternally on the shoulder and assured her that she was going to be a great success.

conscious!" exclaimed Mrs. Ames petulantly. "Why, the play is laid in England."

"But you have just told me that, although it has an English setting, its philosophy, and satire are universal. I really don't think it will look at all well for you to play in it."

"Do you want me to give up my amusement for the winter because the managers of your party are painfully inadequate to their job?" demanded Kate, with something very like a sneer disfiguring her face.

"Whatever I may desire, I have no expectation of your doing anything but what you please," snapped Elliott,

abruptly leaving his wife.

After that, they did not speak for two weeks, except in the presence of the servants, or of the public. Kate threw herself with great fervor into the rehearsals; Elliott absorbed himself in party work. She refused to go to Albany with him at the opening of the legislative session, alleging a rehearsal.

When he went to his train without pleading with her, she wept half the afternoon upon the sofa in her dressing room, and telephoned to the stage manager of the Thalias that she would be

unable to rehearse that day.

As for Elliott, he stared out of the car window all the way up the Hudson, unable to see across the river, although the day was brilliantly clear, because of the hot and angry mist in his eyes.

The play was given the second week in January, and might have escaped with more or less perfunctory notice, even then, had not the entertainment been preceded by the "act" of a titled Englishwoman, who was affording New York society a mild sensation by her barefoot dancing. Any performance in which she appeared was sure of a full attendance of reporters, and of "display heads" in the newspapers.

When her much-heralded performance had been followed by the brilliant satire on reform politics, in which the wife of the most prominent young political reformer of the season played the leading part, the situation was piquant to the last degree for the purveyors of news; and the next morning every paper gave equal space to the bare feet of the Lady Marion and the lines of Mrs. Jimmy Clivedon, in "Solon

Junior."

The quarrel which followed between Elliott and Kate was the most bitter and searching that they had ever had. It ended in her statement, flashed out at him in an icy voice, and with a steely glance, that she wished to leave him. He replied, growing pale, and speaking with a sudden quiet self-restraint that somehow struck more anguish to Kate's soul than any of his previous louder, less-guarded utterances, that she was doubtless right, and that he had for some time been coming to the same

opinion himself. He had bowed to her, then, with a certain formality, as though already they were upon the footing of strangers, and had left her.

Through Kate's anger and sense of injustice a curious chill of fear ran. She had fairly to scourge herself to keep alive her indignation, and to refrain from crying out: "Oh, he wants to leave me; he wants to leave me! I'm so

lonely.

That night a message reached her, through one of the servants, that he had gone out to the house at Huntoon's Point; he would be in town the next morning, and would communicate with

her at once.

Her first sense of bewilderment, her first premonitions of pain and loneliness, had disappeared, burned up in the anger she had carefully nourished all day. She had worked herself up finally to believe that she did, indeed, desire freedom from Elliott, that she was abused and downtrodden by his inordinate selfishness. She had talked to herself about her talent, and her right to its development and use; she had reenforced herself with recollections of all her people—their dramatic gifts, their temperamental disdain of the stupidly conventional life.

In all her outbursts of temper and pettishness up to this time, there had been no real expectation of a dissolution of her marriage. That was a bugaboo which she used to frighten Elliott. Never, until he had given the notion seriousness by accepting it, had it been serious to her. But now it was real, and she busied her mind to find justifi-

cation for its sudden reality.

The next morning she awaited the telephone message from Elliott with a sense of excited expectation. Would the night have confirmed him in his resolution, or would it have made him see the impossibility of living apart from her? Her own thoughts were all in a turmoil. She knew, with some humiliation, that she herself might be veered in any direction by her husband's attitude. She was not fixed in her anger against him. Each time that the telephone rang, she rushed quickly to it,

and then paused before taking down the receiver. She did not wish to seem too eager, too tremulous, too expectant—or anything—so she allowed the servants to answer, and each time until eleven o'clock it was some casual message, unconnected with the great business of the day.

At eleven her maid answered the ringing bell, and Kate sat pretending to read while she listened to the disjointed

remarks across the room.

"Yes, this is Mrs. Ames' house. Yes, I think Mrs. Ames is at home. Who shall I say wishes to speak with her? Please repeat. I don't understand—I am to—prepare——" Then she jiggled the hook, and said impatiently: "Operator, can't you give us a better connection? I cannot hear." And then, after a moment: "Prepare her—oh!" The last word was a mere long-drawn breath of horror.

Kate was halfway across the room. Her face was very white. One thought beat in her brain, one fear flowed icily through her veins. She was to be "prepared" to learn that Elliott was dead—Elliott, who had left her in anger; Elliott, who might never look at her again with kinder eyes than those cold and steady ones he had turned upon her yesterday morning.

"Give me the telephone," she cried, snatching the receiver from the serv-

ant's hand.

The girl looked at her with fright and pity in her eyes.
"Oh, Mrs, Ames!" she exclaimed piti-

fully. "Let me tell you——"

"Hello," Kate was saying, in an unexpectedly steady voice. "This is Mrs. Ames. Who is speaking? What is the matter? Answer me quickly, please."

She listened, and her face, that had seemed pale from the first moment that she had scented calamity, grew whiter and whiter; her blue eyes seemed frozen in an expression of terror. But she kept the receiver to her ear, her pallid lips to the mouthpiece. After a minute or two, she said, still quite steadily:

"I will be there at once."

"Elsie," she added, turning to her terror-stricken maid, "my mother has been killed in an automobile accident at Huntoon's Point. I am going out at once. Get me some clothes, and find out how soon the train leaves."

In some inconsequential way, as she waited for the girl, who was moving around with smothered ejaculations of pity, to get out her street clothes, she thought of the day on which news of her father's death had been brought. That had been very different. She had had a lover then who lived but to comfort her, to save her from all harshness and cruelty of life. And now there was no one with her to bear this horrible blow. There were no arms to support her trembling figure, there was no breast upon which she might shut out the vision of that dear frame mangled, that dear, sad face unrecognizable.

She was at The Orchard two hours The quaint little house seemed full of people to her as she entered people who fell back before her, and allowed her to make her way unaddressed to her mother's bedroom. Death had not been so terrible as her tortured imagination had pictured. The great machine had thrown Delia Crossett to one side, and it was a blow upon her head, and no fearful weight of dragging wheels, that had killed her. Death had done its familiar work of smoothing all the lines from the patient face. It seemed very beautiful to Kate as it lay upon the pillow, in spite of the remote austerity which it never had worn for her in life.

When she came out of the room, the doctor, who had been waiting to see her, told her how it had happened; and then she learned that it had been one of her husband's cars, returning after leaving him at the station, which had caused her mother's death.

To her, that was the end of all things. In her silent, frenzied grief—a grief now tinged by the remorseful thought that she had neglected her mother of late—she called her husband the mur-

derer of Delia Crossett.

When he hastened out, having been intercepted with the news as he reached town, she looked at him out of stony eyes. He hurried toward her, his face

working with tenderness, and pity, and horror. He had been a devoted son-inlaw to Delia Crossett, many times making up to her, in his serious, responsible way, for her gay daughter's little neglects. His hands were outstretched toward Kate. All the past had been obliterated, for him, by the tragedy of the morning, just as it had been crystallized, for her, into a permanent estrangement.

Kate, standing very tall and statuesque before him, had repelled him with her look even before she spoke. When

she did speak, it was to say:

"I never wish to see you again. Never, never, never!"

CHAPTER IV.

Every one who had the privilege of addressing Elliott intimately-and he was aggrieved to find how many persons claimed it-assured him that his wife had been slightly unstrung by shock, and that she would, of course, return to her normal self in a short

Elliott had a premonition that these pleasing prophecies were not based upon an exhaustive knowledge of Kate's disposition and moods. However, he agreed with his advisers that it was best to let her have her own way for a while after the tragedy. She said that she wished to live in her mother's house. and this she did. Her father-in-law, an amiable, rubicund gentleman, used to visit her there, and entreat her to return with him to the big stone house in the hills. Kate was very gentle with him, but very firm about doing as she pleased. When he drew moving pictures of Elliott's loneliness and misery, at first she was silent; but one day, about three weeks after her mother's death, she interrupted his vivid description of his son's sad state by asking:

"Has Elliott never told you, Mr. Ames, that he and I had already agreed to separate before this happened?"

"God bless my soul! Hasn't Elliott

been behaving himself?"

It was from the late Mrs. Ames, and not from his father, that Elliott had inherited that high ethical sense which impelled him to go forth and reform the world, and to lead a sternly upright life. To the elder Mr. Ames' conventional mind, the statement that Kate and her husband had planned to separate meant only one thing-that Elliott had been "cutting up," and had been found

out.

Kate informed her father-in-law that. to the best of her knowledge and belief, Elliott's conduct as a husband had been impeccable. But, she added, they had discovered their temperaments to be totally incompatible. They were very unhappy, they had no common interests; she was willing to take the blame for the whole affair, and ascribe it all to the strain of vagabondage in her blood; but the truth was that she could not stand the sort of life that Elliott particularly loved, and he had no sympathy with her tastes and ambitions.

"God bless my soul!" murmured Mr. Ames again, this time in a subdued and

puzzled key.

He had reasoned with his charming daughter-in-law, pouring a great flood of worldly wisdom into her pretty ears. He had told her that most marriages were between incompatible temperaments, but if people only had common sense, and avoided intercourse before lunch time, they could worry along quite comfortably.

But Kate had been deaf to all arguments, and the conversation had ended in his promising to be the bearer to Elliott of a message from her to the effect that she would like to see his lawyers, to arrange for the separation upon

which they had agreed.

When the papers appeared with the cheerful announcement that Mrs. Elliott Ames had taken up her residence in Reno, for the usual purpose, there was a mild buzzing among her intimates in the Thalia Club, and elsewhere.

"I don't see why she stood that muff of a husband as long as she did," said Betty Pruett to her husband—her third, one having been lost to her by death, and one by the same Western process

that Kate was about to try.

"What's she going to do?" inquired Mr. Pruett, voicing the thought of many in his words. "Hasn't got any money,

has she?"

"Oh, I suppose the muff will give her a decent allowance," replied Betty cheerfully. "He's that kind—highly honorable, grave, and all the rest of it. Besides"—here Betty sighed—"Kate Ames has talent, real talent. She is the only amateur I ever saw who had, except myself."

"So! You think the young lady will go on the stage! Well, my dear young woman, don't you get any notions in

your head-"

"Don't worry," replied Betty, half sadly. "I'm thirty-eight to Kate's twenty-four or five. I am too old—they

wouldn't have me."

"That Ware fellow—weren't he and Mistress Kate quite thick for a while, before he went over to England?" pursued Mr. Pruett, with that interest in personal affairs which he would have been first to proclaim an exclusive attribute of the feminine sex.

"Kate wouldn't be such a fool," answered Betty Pruett decidedly. "After all, she's had the experience of living

with a gentleman."

"Oh, you admit you've asked a man who wasn't a gentleman to your house?"

her husband teased her.

"I'd hate to think how many answering that description I have asked to my house. But I haven't married them, Jimmy, dear. I got through with marrying that kind when I was nineteen."

And, with this delicate reference to the husband she had lost via the courts, Mrs. Pruett went downstairs to await

her dinner guests.

When Kate returned from Reno, the intoxicating fever of independence burned in her. She was young, full-blooded, passionately gay-hearted, in spite of a certain soft lovingness which she had. She had cared for her mother fondly, and had been horror-stricken at the manner of her death. But she was alive, she was well, she was young. She was conscious of talent. She knew the happiness of impersonating some other being than herself.

She had asked for no settlement from

Elliott, and had, indeed, refused the offer which his lawyers made to her. She had intimated to them that she expected to be able to earn her own living, and that, meantime, her mother's estate was amply equal to her modest wants. She had established a man and his wife, in whom her mother had had great confidence, at The Orchard, and they were conducting the chicken business quite successfully for her, and also tak-

ing care of the house.

But when she returned to the East. it was not to Huntoon's Point, and to the poultry farm, that she first made her way, but to a hotel, whence she communicated with Mr. Hartley Greaves. In the days when she had been an amateur, Hartley Greaves had seen her act two or three times, and had taken occasion to tell her that, as a manager, he regretted her fortunate marriage, which had deprived the stage of a rare comedienne. Of course, she hardly hoped that Mr. Greaves would

be quite so flattering now. Mr. Greaves had been involved in a professional war with the syndicate. He had conducted it not without success. It was he who had starred the actress, Hedwig Ulla, in the only series of Ibsen productions that had ever been known to make money, as he boasted; it was he who had imported the Russian actress who was to steal some of Nazimova's thunder, and who actually managed to do it; it was he who had starred Mrs. Jerome Towers during the two years of her noisy, spectacular quarrel with her first manager; and it was he who had "discovered" Lorraine Olston, who had been such a

But Mr. Greaves constantly found himself in the position of all gentlemen adventuring outside the prescribed circle; others constantly made capital out of his efforts; thus far his chief success was in being a schoolmaster whose pupils the syndicate admitted to its ranks on certificate, so to speak. That ravening body snatched his stars from his dramatic sky, and set them in its own. This season Lorraine Olston had signed with it; last year it had been the foreign

success last year.



Mr. Greaves poked his head into the little room, and observed jovially, "I hear your ex was in front to-night."

ladies. Mrs. Jerome Towers had effected a reconciliation with her original managers, and had gone back to them.

Mr. Greaves had a company, to be sure, and a play or two from which he hoped something. But he was not as brilliantly well off in the matter of talent as he could wish. He received Kate's message, therefore, with more interest than he might have had in it a few years earlier. He went to the St. Regis

to see her almost at the hour she had suggested; of course, it would not have done for him to go at exactly the hour.

He wondered, as the lift carried him softly up to her suite, if she was drawing a large alimony from her late husband, and decided that she must be, otherwise she would surely not be staying at this hotel. Mr. Greaves had not had the benefit of an acquaintance with Mortimer Crossett to help him in read-

ing Kate's character. He was glad to believe that she was in receipt of a large income; he even hoped that it might be large enough to make her willing to finance the production of a play herself.

He could not disguise his grief at the discovery that Kate was planning to take money out of the theatrical profession, rather than to bring it into

"It's a great pity, Mrs. Ames—or Miss Crossett, to call you by your professional name," he observed. "Of course, if you were going with the syndicate, money would be no object to them. But neither would the sort of play in which you would appear be the proper vehicle for you; they would not provide the proper setting, the proper support. They would plan to exploit you for all that you were worth. Your divorce—"

"If there might be only some way in which I could prevent the divorce being mentioned in connection with my work!" sighed Kate.

"Under my management as little reference as possible will be made to it," replied Mr. Greaves virtuously. "I shall have no mention of the subject at all in the notices sent out from my office, although, of course, the newspapers will inevitably comment upon it. But if you were with the syndicate, they would play up your divorce more than your whole family connection, your talent, or your play."

"Well, I am sorry I haven't a barrel of money to put into the venture," said Kate, smiling sweetly. "But I haven't. All my income is derived from the sale of eggs and broilers—"

"Gad! If you get as much for fresh eggs as my wife has to pay for them," commented Mr. Greaves, "you ought to be able to put on anything."

"I am not selling enough," laughed Kate. "And, as I was saying, since that is my only source of revenue, I want to go on the stage to earn money, rather than to sink money."

Excited as she was about her future, absorbed as she was in her own plans, Kate was subtly aware of a faint change in Mr. Greaves' manner toward her. When she communed with herself afterward on the subject, she was unable to "place" the difference; but at the time it seemed to her that there was a sort of atmospheric change in the room. It was as indefinable as a slight lowering of the temperature. Yet she was convinced that Hartley Greaves, the manager, who had been all deference and intelligent flattery toward her up to this time, had become Hartley Greaves, the slightly familiar, the slightly arrogant.

"You've got a lot to learn, in spite of your talent," Mr. Greaves announced, after he had studied her for a few

"I'm willing to work hard enough to learn," said Kate eagerly.

"It's one thing to appear before an audience of friendly people, all of them your admirers, who are giving away their money any way, and are grateful if any return is made for it, and to appear before a perfectly cold audience, who have paid to be entertained, not to help a charity."

"I know it," replied Kate humbly.
"Of course," Mr. Greaves conceded kindly, "you've got generations of it in your blood—that'll help."

Kate's eyes filled with nervous tears. She thought of her mother and her

"I'd try not to disgrace my forbears." She smiled a little tremulously.

"I won't let you disgrace them," Mr. Greaves promised her emphatically. "But you'll have to put yourself under my charge for six months or so. You've got to learn how to use your voice; you've got to learn how to listen. You've got a good carriage," he added, leaning back and surveying her critically. "I always liked to see you walk—you didn't lose control of your legs when you had to cross the stage. Your body is flexible."

In spite of herself, Kate felt the blood mount to her face at this frank inventory of her points.

"Have you got anything," she began nervously, trying to change the subject, "in hand for me now?"

"I have got a play of Ware's in my desk that's the finest thing since Sheridan wrote 'The School for Scandal,'" Mr. Greaves flaunted himself. "If Olston hadn't been a fool, she could have made the hit of her life in it. But. noshe had to run after the beck and call of an extra fifty per week. And what's happened to her? Two rotten failures -two Labrador frosts-and she's sitting in her hotel room, waiting for the Sneeds to find her a play that will succeed. The Sneeds! They would have turned down 'Hamlet' if they had had a chance-they did turn down 'Jim, the Penman.' They don't know a live play from a wooden box of salted codfish."

"And you think perhaps I could try the part that Miss Olston gave up?" Kate tried to recall Mr. Greaves from the congenial subject of the rival firm's

stupidities.

"That's what I am going to give you your chance in," replied Mr. Greaves cheerfully, "You'd better get your lawyers in, if you think you need them, and I will be around to-morrow morning with some little papers for you to sign. It's too late in the season for us to do anything in New York this year, but we'll have a copyrighting performance up in Utica, and I will try you on the dog in Kansas City in May or June. That'll give Ware a chance to make over the play, if it needs it, before we come into the city next fall. It will give you some eight or nine months of good hard labor, too, before you make your Broadway appearance-and you need it, my lady, for all you were the star of the Thalia Club, Gad, but the fashionable amateurs are the limit!"

Kate subdued an impulse to clasp him by the hand and kiss it. She observed, in the second of rejecting the notion, that the cuff above the hand was not spotless, and that the knuckles themselves showed a little office grime; moreover, the hand, like the rest of Mr. Greaves' person, was pudgy. By some uncontrolled vagary, Elliott's hand, strong, lean, firm, and steady—the hand of a man, and of a gentleman, as well—obtruded itself upon her recollection.

The vision slightly chilled her en-

Mr. Greaves, however, did not notice that, and, as she thanked him, and said how ready she would be for the lawyers and the papers in the morning, he patted her paternally on the shoulder and assured her that she was going to be a great success—that Olston would be tearing out her eyes and her hair in less than a year, from pure jealousy.

Kate opened the ventilators after Mr. Greaves had gone, and wondered why she had never noticed his offensive manner in the old days, when he had directed two or three rehearsals for the Thalia Club. It was impossible, she decided, that his manner had undergone any real change in so brief a period.

The next evening all the papers contained the information that Mrs. Elliott Ames, who had just returned from Reno, after having happily effected an escape from marital chains, had signed with Mr. Greaves a three years' contract. Pictures of Kate and of Elliott, old pictures of Kate's mother and father, all their old, painful, pitiful story, pictures of Kate's grandmother and great-uncles, pictures of Elliott Ames, Senior, and of the Ames' "palace" at Huntoon's Point, were published in the more spectacular sheets.

When Kate saw them she had a moment's fright-how angry they would make Elliott, how frightfully distasteful to him the whole thing would be! Then she shook herself. She was happily freed from Elliott and his likes and dislikes, his absurd prejudices, his silly narrowness! Never again would she be frightened by the thought of a glowering glance from him, or a stern word. or a contemptuous question! She was free of him, and had entered into her own life! She looked at the paper again, and vigorously put down the nascent inquiry as to how she was going to like her own life herself.

CHAPTER V.

Allison Ware came back from England to superintend the rehearsals of his play, "The Weaker Vessel," a sparkling little comedy, whose brilliant, big-heart-

ed heroine was, by some saving grace of originality, not too reminiscent of Bernard Shaw's Candida, or of Barrie's heroine in "What Every Woman Knows." And he and Kata harman more friendly even than they had been during the brief resumption of their acquaintance the winter the Thalias had played in his comedietta. Kate was thrown much more upon him than she had been before, when her life had been full of other interests than those purely theatrical.

He still kept for her much of the charm he had had in the days when her father had brought him to the convent, and she thrust aside, or elbowed out of her mind, the critical thoughts of him, which her later sophistication suggested. She had not moved in New York society for four or five years without learning the hallmarks of dissipation, but when she saw them on Allison Ware's face, she told herself that all men of genius were men of occasional excesses.

What was unforgivable animalism in a banker or a broker or a business man of any sort become the mark of a delicately strung organism in an artist. What would have been dishonesty in the ordinary man of affairs was merely the temperamental inability to deal with practical matters in a man of genius. Thus Kate put down the criticisms that suggested themselves concerning her refound old playfellow.

He had joined them first at Utica, where they had gone for the purpose of giving a performance which would serve to copyright the play. Kate had no acquaintances in the town, and neither had Allison Ware, and the idle hours before the performance they spent

together.

He was very good-looking, in spite of the excesses which, more than his years, had served to bleach his hair and line his face. He had the graceful, boyish figure which she remembered from St. Rose's days, and his eyes had never lost the trick of sympathetic laughter which had made one Christmas holiday so memorable.

That they were capable also of ex-

pressing great admiration without words was something which Kate was not seasoned enough against the arts of flattery to withstand. When he told her that it was after seeing her in "Solon Junior" that he had written "The Weaker Vessel," with her in mind as the heroine, she felt a swelling surety of success and exaltation.

He told her about her father, too, on that day when they walked about the streets of Utica, killing time. most delicate artistry, he managed to suggest a reverent sympathy with Kate's mother, with a tolerant, irrepressible affection for her father. Kate's eyes filled with ready tears at his tone.

"You always understood the poor,

dear, weak darling!" she cried.

She thought how she had once or twice tried to make Elliott see her fascinating father with her eyes, and how Elliott had been obviously unable to consider Mortimer Crossett anything but a contemptible travesty upon manhood. The primary virtues loomed so large in Elliott's scheme of existence, she thought bitterly, that he had no room for the graces.

Later, in Kansas City, Allison developed all sorts of pleasing congeniali-He always had time to explore out-of-the-way corners of the town, and to make little picnics beyond it. He had excellent tastes, tinged with imagination; he could please a woman's fancy by a gift without making it from some famous shop. Poor Elliott had labored under the disadvantage of knowing only the most expensive places in which to buy tributes for his beloved one.

Besides all these minor bonds between them, there was always the great bond of the part and the play. Allison was able to rage with Kate concerning the stupidity of the leading man, they were able together to rail at the mistaken economics of Hartley Greaves, whose settings, they both firmly declared, were atrocious. Their lives touched each other at every point during this period.

When "The Weaker Vessel" came to New York, its success was somewhat phenomenal. Kate leaped at once into a position of favorite, such as most actresses attain only after years. The older generation of theatregoers welcomed the daughter of her father and mother. The generation which had no recollection of those bygone celebrities was enormously amused by the delicate fun and satire of the play, and by the piquant charm of the heroine.

Kate's friends, old and new, some dating back even to St. Rose's days, trooped to her first night. For once the applause of a premier appearance was not contradicted by the wisdom of the next morning's papers, or by the chilliness of dwindling houses through

the next two weeks.

Kate was almost in too great a whirl of excitement and pleasure during the days immediately preceding the New York opening to have much leisure for introspection. Once or twice a day, perhaps, the thought of her ex-husband crossed her mind. It was a slightly annoying thought—hardly disagreeable enough to be dignified with the name of pain, but distinctly troublesome. It was an interruption to joyful reveries. It would chill the glow of her expectations; it would stop the glad onward rush of anticipation.

Sometimes she hoped that he would be present on her opening night, to see and to suffer under the brilliancy of her success. Then she would hope that he would not be present; he would be a blighting influence, he would help spoil

things.

"Ās if there were the slightest danger of his darkening the doors of any theatre where I am playing!" she usually ended her meditations on this subject.

impatient of herself.

When the great night itself actually arrived, with its smiling, friendly faces all blurred into one welcoming beam across the footlights, with its appreciative ripples of laughter, its tumultuous bursts of applause, its tributes of flowers, beneath the weight of which the ushers staggered as they hurried forward at the end of the second act, Kate entirely forgot Elliott and her half worriment concerning him.

She did not remember him on the stage—there she remembered nothing except the part she was playing—she did not remember him behind the scenes, where Hartley Greaves, dropping the mask of solemn simplicity which he wore always before his public, walked back and forth among the dressing rooms, almost sobbing in his delight, and assuring his star, and her support, and the rapturous playwright, "We've done it this time: we've got'em, sure."

done it this time; we've got 'em, sure."

She did not think of him, when, in response of the flattering din, which would not cease, at the end of the second act, she came out again and again to bow her thanks. In the joyful enthusiasm of the moment every one had been called for—the star, her leading man, the whole company, the manager, and the author. Ware had made a speech, admirable for its brevity, and Mr. Greaves, resuming his wide-eyed, ponderous manner, had weightedly given thanks to its audience for its reception of the play.

It was Betty Pruett who started a last call for a speech from the star; she stood up in the box in which she had seated half of the party which she had brought to see Kate Crossett's début, and had called, with an appearance of fervent artlessness which was fine acting, in its way: "Kate Crossett!"

The call had been taken up all over the house, where Kate's friends were freely sprinkled, and where the rest of the audience, good-humored and facilely enthusiastic, were perfectly will-

ing to follow their lead.

When she came on, in response to that call, Kate was genuinely moved. She was borne up on wings of exaltation, but a feeling of humility mingled with it. A thousand emotions surged through her—the thought of how proud her father would have been, how grieved her mother, over her appearance in that profession, the thought of how easily won was popular favor—a shuddering sense of how easily it was lost. She had a palpitant moment's realization of the narrow ledge that divides success from defeat.

Her emotion was genuine when she

extended her graceful arms in a sort of appeal a n d a sort of t h a n k s-giving to her audience, and c r i e d out, with an effect of total artlessness:

"Oh, I don't deserve it—I don't deserve it, but I am so glad! I thank you all with all my heart."

But in all those tumultuous moments there was no thought of Elliott, who, having

sworn by all his gods that he would never see his ex-wife act, and, having fortified this good resolution on this particular night by making several engagements, found his feet irresistibly led to the theatre before which her name was emblazoned in electric letters a foot high, and as irresistibly led within it

He would not buy a seat—nothing would have induced him to meet the battery of eyes that would be turned upon him if he should walk down the orchestra aisle. He intended merely to stay for a few minutes, safe and obscure in the darkness behind the seats.

But he found himself staying on and on through the whole of the charming act, listening again with unwilling admiration to the vibrant, eager notes of Kate's musical voice, watching—and loathing himself as he watched—all her graceful motions.

He had never felt her charm more strongly than he did as he stood there in the dark, and watched her bitterly.



He caught her hands and kissed them.

He had never known what jealousy was until it rose upon him in a red, engulfing wave as he saw her head upon her lover's shoulder, her lover's hand upon her lustrous hair. He could have hurled an imprecation at all of them—company, author, and manager, and at the audience, too, tinkling with laughter, murmuring appreciation.

He had stood rooted to the spot when the curtain went down upon the act, and the lights flared up all over the house. He knew from the loud, steady applause that he was safe for a few minutes yet—that the men would not begin hurrying to the lobbies until that had died down.

He listened to Allison Ware's witty speech of thanks with jaws almost ground together in futile rage against this trick of graceful expression.

And then he saw his old enemy, Mrs. Pruett, rise and call for his wife. He hated her—Betty Pruett—with a new intensity of fierceness; he felt that he could not bear it, if Kate responded,

that he could not endure to see her thankful for this noisy tumult.

But neither could he leave the spot where he was planted. He staved, he watched the graceful, lithesome figure, saw the arms outstretched in that sweet gesture of generous surrender that he had known so well, heard the broken

voice.

When the final burst of applause following her speech had died down, he was barely able to jerk himself away from the spot, and escape through the doors into the garish street before the crowd of Kate's admirers streamed out

after him.

He did not escape entirely unnoticed, however, and when Kate was dressing, after the last act, for the big, gay, resplendent supper party that Betty Pruett was giving to all concerned in the evening's success, Mr. Greaves. poked his head into the little room where she sat in a blinding glare of electricity, scrubbing the make-up from her face with cold cream, and observed jovially:

"I hear your ex was in front tonight. Came to scoff and remained to

pray, I suppose?"

Kate's maid, at a gesture, interposed herself between the star and the dressing-room door. One of the things to which the late Mrs. Ames could not accustom herself was this free-and-easy intercourse behind the scenes. No one could be more of a martinet than Greaves in observing the letter of the law about the admission of outsiders to the dressing rooms, but there his formality ceased. He had already given Kate to understand that he considered her "too damn particular," because she objected to holding intercourse with gentlemen while in the process of making up or of unmaking.

"Good Lord, girl," he had exclaimed roughly, "aren't you twice as thoroughly clothed in that kimono thing as in the evening clothes you have been wearing the last three or four years? if you weren't, what difference do you suppose it would make to me?"

Kate had endeavored to make him understand that it was not his feelings

she was interested in preserving from shock, but her own. But the distinction passed lightly over Mr. Greaves' head, and he continued, as before, to poke his head through the curtain that hung in front of her door, and to converse with her as she sat before her big mirrors, or stood behind her big screen.

To-night, when Elsie had barricaded her mistress from too close a survey on the part of the manager, Kate answered his observation about Elliott in

a frigid voice.

"Mr. Ames had met Mr. Ware," she remarked, rather idiotically, "and I dare say wanted to see his play."

Hartley Greaves laughed.

"Well, it doesn't matter what brings 'em, so long as they come," he replied

good-naturedly.

"I'll have the boy take that floral junk over to your hotel in a cab, if you say so. Gad, but I've seen the time when I should have liked to convert it into cash! But things are coming our way now-things are coming our way."

He went off again through the narrow passages, and Kate heard his voice and his chuckling, unaffected laughter, as he paused here and there to say a self-gratulatory word or two. Later, at Mrs. Pruett's supper party, he was all that was grave and reticent. His smile was infrequent, and he had the air of a man pondering plans not to be lightly spoken.

"I sometimes think that he's the best actor of all of us," said Kate to Allison Ware, who shared her taxicab to the door of her hotel, after the tumultuously triumphant party had disbanded.

"Whatever he is, he's a made man now, thanks to you. And I'm a made man, thanks to you. I've had three requests for interviews about plays already. The syndicate is sitting up and taking notice, but it isn't Greaves, and it isn't I-it's you, it's all you, little Kate, of the convent!"

He caught her hands, which were ungloved since the supper, and kissed them. Kate tried to withdraw themshe had a sudden, obscure sense of indignity. But he would not let them

go, he kissed them again and again. The cab slowed up at the entrance of the Gotham before she could recover herself.

"You must never do such a thing as that again," she told him breathlessly, as the carriage porter opened the door.

Allison laughed.

"Not kiss my benefactress' hand?" he answered, with tender mockery in his voice.

And Kate felt, childishly, that she could not make the answer that hovered on her lips:

"Not in that way."

But she went to bed with the feeling of those ardent kisses, not of gratitude alone, upon her soft flesh, and before her eyes the vision of a hurt and angry man hurrying out of the theatre to the sound of loud applause.

CHAPTER VI.

"My dear Kate, you don't stand upon your rights as the most charming star in America. You should be short with Greaves. He's not the only managerial pebble on the theatrical beach, and you should let him know it. Think what Dawson, think what Levy and Greenfield would offer you."

"Unfortunately, I have some feeling of gratitude for Mr. Greaves," Kate answered Allison Ware. It was a year and a half after her brilliant début. "He spent an enormous amount of pains on me—he believed in me, and gave me my chance. I can't throw him over."

Allison looked at her with a certain cold anger in his deliberate stare.

"But did no one else have any part in your success? I had labored under the delusion that you were full of heartfelt thanks to me for providing you with so fitting a vehicle as 'The Weaker Vessel' proved."

"There was much mutual exchange of gratitude, if I remember our opening aright," said Kate coldly. "But, anyway, I understand that your play

isn't ready?"

"Greaves has seen the scenario, and pretended to like it very much," replied Allison, in an aggrieved way. "I claim

to be something of an artist. I can't write it as though I were a glazier, putting in so many panes of glass a day. But there is no sense of his flying off the handle, and forcing you into that thing of Miss Anstrauther's. The wit is about as delicate as a bludgeon, the situations are of the hoariest antiquity. It will be suicidal for you to appear in it, and if Greaves weren't a mutton-headed old goat, he'd see it himself. I suppose the truth of the matter is that he's able to beat her down, because it's her first play, and because she's a woman; and he thinks that the name which you have made for yourself in my play will carry off anything for a season or two. But I tell you, my dear girl, he was never more mistaken in his life, and neither were you, if you agree with him. Any of the other men, if you'd break with Greaves, would wait for 'Twickenham Ferry, and you could go on duplicating the success you've had."

There was a good deal of eagerness in his tone, although he endeavored to disguise it beneath the bored air of one repeating platitudes merely for anoth-

er's guidance.

"To tell the truth," Allison pursued, in a new voice, pressing some advantage which he thought he had gained, "I simply can't bear to have you appear in another man's play, or another woman's, either. Your success and mine were bound up together. It isn't just the selfishness of the playwright that I feel, it's the selfishness of—ah, you know, Kate; you know!"

He had sunk on his knees beside the chair in which she half reclined. He caught her hand, hanging limply over

the arm of the chair.

"It's the selfishness of the lover, Kate," he told her. "You've known how I've been feeling these last three months, since I came back from England, haven't you? I think I have been feeling that way a good deal longer—perhaps ever since you were a chubby-faced little Kate Crossett, of the convent garden; but at last I've come to know how I feel. You've guessed it, haven't you, Kate?"

Kate looked at him almost gravely.

"I think I have guessed it a little," she answered steadily. "Since you came back, I mean. I almost thought you had forgotten about me the year you were back in England. You treated me as you did once when I was a little girl—you never even answered my letters."

She smiled down into the handsome face below her. It occurred to her, even then, that there were very few men who could remain upon their knees as long as Allison, and suffer no loss of

dignity or of grace.

"I was sure you understood," he said softly. "We've been such good comrades, haven't we, Kate? That's been the marvel of it, to me. Love and passion—of course, I haven't reached my age without thinking I knew something about them. But companionship, equal, and free, and unafraid—that was a new thing in my experience with women."

He lightly kissed the tapering white

fingers, and rose.

Kate waited the logical conclusion of his remarks. She was prepared to put him to the trouble of removing some of her scruples against the second marriages of divorcées, and had also made up her mind to let him know that nothing would induce her to give up her career. But, of course, her reason told her, Allison would not want her to do that. She had, however, no immediate opportunity for learning his views on the subject. His next words were not a proposal.

"Well, to return to our original topic," said Allison lightly. "Can't you get Greaves to keep 'The Weaker Vessel' a little while longer? I'll guarantee to have 'Twickenham Ferry' ready for rehearsal in three months."

Curiously chilled, Kate heard herself replying: "But I really don't think that Greaves thinks as well of your scenario as he does of Miss Anstrauther's play. He says—tell me, Allison, is it true—that you're falling into the mistake of all the dramatists who have made a single strike, and are trying to palm off a juvenile on him."

"Greaves and his like think that plays are like batter cakes," sneered Alli-

son, "the last one from the griddle always the best. As a matter of fact, it's the idea that's been maturing in a man's mind for years that is the one worth developing. I've had the theme for 'Twickenham Ferry' in my mind for twenty years. But that doesn't make it any less the novel and worth while."

Kate continued to look nonplused and

slightly unhappy.

"Perhaps you also think that Miss Anstrauther's play is better than mine gives promise of being?" Vanity and anger were again apparent in the man's

tones.

"I'm not going to be browbeaten into saying that I like the idea for 'Twickenham Ferry' as well as the idea for 'The Weaker Vessel.' I don't think, of course, that the Anstrauther girl can handle situations as deftly, or write as heavenly conversations as you do. But I'm blessed, my dear Allison"—Kate began to recover her spirits as she freed her mind, and spoke with certain gayety—"if I don't think her little play has a bully good idea!"

"There never was an actress yet who knew the least thing about the quality of a play," declared Kate's visitor. "So you won't persuade Greaves to wait for a really good play for you? Well, you'll be sorry when Maude Adams is making the hit of her life in it."

He walked toward the table where his hat lay, and took it up. Kate watched him with a curious, baffled feeling growing upon her. Had it been a dream of hers that the man was on his knees before her, telling her of his love, not half an hour since? Was she under the spell of some strange delusion? She determined to make a test.

"If I should refuse to appear in Miss Anstrauther's comedy, and should insist upon yours, Allison," she told him, "the new manager who sought to engage my distinguished services would have an awful bill to pay. Greaves has been a perfect duck about letting me draw advances."

"You mean you're in debt to that designing old fellow?" Allison demanded, in a virtuously shocked tone.

"Not to him personally," Kate re-

plied haughtily. "I've had advances

of my salary, that's all,"

"You must be the most extravagant human being that God ever created! Why, you haven't a living creature to help, have you? And I dare say you draw a handsome alimony in the bargain. What do you do with your mon-

ey, Kate?"

"I most emphatically do not draw any alimony," declared Kate furiously. "You must have a very low idea of the woman you pretend to—to admire so much, if you think me capable of such a thing. As for the rest"—Mortimer Crossett's daughter sighed, and half laughed—"well, I'm sure I don't know where the money goes. I don't feel extravagant."

Allison looked at her, at the laces and silks that enveloped her charming person, at the exquisite room which housed her, at the flowers which adorned it.

"Oh, no, you're not extravagant! You haven't a single extravagant taste!"

He moved toward her, his eyes brightening at the potent influence of her grace and beauty. When he reached her side, she was conscious of a tremor that shook her. He passed his arm about her shoulders, half drawing her to him.

"Kate, you're irresistible," he whispered; and, with a light brushing of her hair with his lips, he was gone.

She stood still when he had left her, a prey to a mixture of feelings. Something in him undeniably charmed her, something revolted; and to-day, certainly, something had outraged her. Did he think that she was a woman to be halfway wooed? She stamped an angry

foot at the thought.

As the days passed, she found herself less and less able to understand Allison's attitude. He had finally succeeded in persuading Greaves to pigeonhole Miss Anstrauther's play, and was working with might and main on "Twickenham Ferry." He repeated to Kate, over and over again, his reason for desiring her to appear in that, rather than in any play by "an outsider." He assumed constantly that their lives were to be joined, that their inter-

course was to know no cessation. He made love to her in all the ways at his command, sending her flowers and little gifts, consulting her wishes about her new part, spending with her all the leisure that both of them could command.

He made no further reference to her early attitude about "Twickenham Ferry," but seemed to take it for granted that Greaves had met her wishes as fully as his own in substituting that piece for the one upon which he had almost decided. And Kate, in turn, had tried to banish from her mind the recollection of something cold, ugly, unutterably selfish, which had revealed itself in him on that day.

Kate suffered a good deal in her relations with her author. Her vanity was impaled upon a dilemma. She assured herself a hundred times a day that she was too proud a woman, that she occupied too dignified a position, to tolerate for an instant an equivocal position in any man's affection.

Yet pride forbade her, quite as strongly as it reprobated the idea of an undefined "affair" with Allison Ware, to discover exactly where she stood with him. The idea of asking "what his intentions were" naturally did not appeal to her. There was something sordid, vulgar, in the notion of saving to a gentleman who has just called one the only unmixed joy his existence has ever known: "Yes, that's all very fine, but when are you going to ask me to marry you?"

Things did not come to a crisis, with its accompanying lucidity, until some six months later. "Twickenham Ferry" had been rushed through to some sort of a completion, had been rehearsed, and had been tried out in what Allison

Ware called the provinces.

No one was any too well satisfied with the results. Hartley Greaves made the situation agreeable by openly swearing at himself for a fool to have taken it. Ware, on the other hand, declared that he was a fool to have given it to a manager who did not understand the first principles of stage mechanism. Kate felt that the heroine, Anita, of



She went alone to the House of Representatives.

Twickenham Ferry, was nothing but a puppet, provided with a set of stage strings. Nevertheless, somehow the thing had managed to hang together, and the New York season was booked.

There was no such fanfare of triumph over it as over its predecessor, but it managed "to get across," as the stage lingo has it, for all three of the principals engaged in its production were too talented to bungle badly. Ware's deft situations and witty lines, Greaves' wizardry of setting, and Kate's magnetic charm could not fail entirely of their effect with audiences prepared to be pleased.

It was different with the critics. They "regretted" the thinness and the triteness of Mr. Ware's plot, and they declared it a pity if that promising young man—Allison's forty-odd years were treated as infancy by the paternal reviewers of the New York drama—were going to content himself with slovenly work, or that charming young comedienne going to lend herself to inadequate rôles, making no demands upon her real talent. Nevertheless, together they pulled the play through.

They all felt a good deal relieved

when the enthusiasm of the opening night, though a bit perfunctory, reassured them as to their fate for the time being. The tension of the last few weeks was lessened. Some courteous compunction as to their treatment of one another during the period of stress began to occur to them.

There was no Betty Pruett in town this time to convert this affair into one of social glorification, and it was a strictly theatrical party that celebrated the release from forebodings of fail-

They all grew a little reckless in their relief, and Kate was quite sure that Allison was exhibiting his recklessness in the most foolish of all manners, by drinking too much champagne. That was the reason that she would not let him take her home, but preferred to drive with her manager and his wife to her hotel.

"Gad, Katie, girl," declared Greaves, mopping his brow, at the recollection of all the misgivings he had had, "but I am glad the thing pulled through as well as it has. It was against my better judgment that I gave in to you and Ware, but it seems as though, for once,

I shouldn't be obliged to pay the price

of my good nature.

"To me and Ware?" Kate questioned him. "But I didn't try to persuade you to pigeonhole Caroline Anstrauther's play. I think myself it was better than

"I like that! When you threatened to go over to the enemy if I didn't fix

it up with Ware!"

"I threaten to go over to the enemy! I certainly did no such thing." Kate spoke sharply, and her manager at-

tempted to soothe her.

"Oh, now, don't get riled. It's turned out all very well, and I admit that you didn't come threatening to me in person. But Ware gave me your message, and I could understand easily enough you didn't want to have to talk it out with me yourself, if there was any way of avoiding it."

"I never sent you any message," de-

clared Kate vehemently.

"All right, then. You didn't. But I can see as far into a millstone as the next man, and, of course, I understood how you would feel about the play, feeling as you did about Allison. It's all right, Kate; it's all right. But maybe you can see now why I'm so dead set against married stars—that is, stars married to actors or actresses. There's always a rumpus about giving them both parts in the same play. It's bad enough when your leading woman is-friends, eh?-with a playwright."

Kate scarcely knew what she answered in her bewildered mortification. How much of the implication that she had intended to take a stand in regard to Allison's play was her manager's imagination, and how much was due to Allison's own adroit innuendo, she could not tell. But she resolved that the situation was intolerable, and must

end at once.

To-morrow morning he was coming to a twelve-o'clock breakfast with her, and they were bound for an exhibition of pictures later. The picture exhibition should wait while she clarified the air of misunderstanding. What, should she, Kate Crossett, daughter of her parents, wife of her husband, favorite of

the public, friend of the brilliant and the great-should she be put into a doubtful position by this playwright? Yet she confessed, sadly enough, to her hungry heart, that she wanted love, and

felt but half alive without it.

She made herself particularly charming at breakfast. Allison responded easily enough to the fascination which she did not scruple to employ. wanted to get the situation again into her own hands, to be the mistress of her own destiny, and of his. was but one way for her to accomplish that, and that was by making him propose to her unmistakably and finally.

She felt her spirit rising as she led matters toward the desired climax. Once her mood was dashed by the sudden thought that this was not the attitude of love. A woman in love, waiting for the words which are to decide her future, would not feel so completely armed to control the situation. But she pushed

the thought aside.

The feeling of mastery gradually fell away from her as the hour wore on, Allison's response to her beauty, her grace, her coquetry, was unmistakable. He talked extravagantly, like a poet lover, and he made plans for himself and for her as though all their lives were to be spent together, doing a common work and sharing a common fame. Try as she would, she could not induce him to say the words that her selfrespect demanded to hear.

Suddenly she interrupted him in a rhapsody on the sort of summer they could have together in Norway-"We could make up such a nice little party," he had said—to remark: "But suppose

I should be married?"

Her vanity had its instant reward. He grew white, consternation, bewilderment, written on his face. There was no doubt, at any rate, of his feeling She rejoiced, and she half pitied him.

"But—you couldn't—why, every one told me that you turned Hetherington down before I came back last spring and that he had kept every one else from getting anywhere near you. And that's what I've been endeavoring to do myself, Kate, dear, ever since!"

face had regained some of its natural color, his voice its gayety. But his eyes still searched her anxiously. "I'm not going to let anybody marry you," he ended daringly.

She looked at him gravely.

"It seems to me that plain speaking is, after all, the most dignified thing,' she said seriously. "You know there's only one way to keep a woman from marrying another man, Allison, and that is to marry her yourself. Don't think I am trying to propose to you," she added hastily, blushing in spite of herself, "but I only wanted to call your attention to the fact you take me too much for granted.

She was surprised at the effect her words had upon him. He was still a little pale, and there was a new look, half shame and half defiance, in his blue eves. He sat down opposite her, and faced her with compressed lips for a minute. She watched him, trying to smile, in order to show that she thought herself at ease, in control of the situa-

"I've been an awful fool," he said, at last. "I saw you didn't know, and, like an ostrich, I thought by burying my head in the sand to keep things hid-den forever." Her heart began to flutter, and the color to ebb away from her face. "Kate, don't you know that nothing on earth could have kept me from asking you to marry me, from forcing you to marry me, from catching you up and flinging you across my charger, and galloping with you to the uttermost end of the earth, except—one thing?"

"You mean"—Kate's lips moved slowly to form the words, but they were scarcely audible-"you mean that

you are married?"

He nodded mutely. She leaned back among her cushions, her eyes shining black and splendid in the sudden pallor of her face. After a minute's wretched silence, he began to speak.

"I'm a scoundrel, Kate; a blackguard. You can never forgive me. But you could if you knew the strength of the temptation to which I yielded.'

"Don't be conventional about it," Kate begged him. "Of course, you have been rather outrageous; but, on the whole, it's rather amusing to think of me, a seasoned woman of the world, as I fondly call myself; an actress of some time's standing—oh, altogether, a sophisticated creature—being the—shall we call it victim?-of your little mas-

querade,'

"You must not talk like that, Kate," replied Allison gravely, almost paternally. "Cheap cynicism is not for your lips. Of course, you didn't question me; of course, you took me for granted as an honest man. Had you not known me when you were a child? Had you not clung to my hand when your topknot scarcely reached above my waist? If you had not believed in me, if you had applied any cheap, vulgar tests to me, you would not have been yourself noble, truthful, proud-spirited, freeminded—the woman I worship.

The earnestness of his manner, the convincing ring of his words, the little reference to the old garden, and to her father, brought a rush of self-pitying tears to Kate's eyes. She closed her lids upon them, but he saw them, and, with a little, broken cry of pity and pleading, he was on his knees by her side, and was begging her forgiveness.

At last she gave it-that lofty sort of forgiveness which tries to imply that there has been no possibility of real offense. She had listened to his story of his marriage-a boy's foolish escapade, nearly a quarter of a century before. For one thing, her good taste thanked him-he made no charges against his wife, denounced her for nothing, and took all the blame for the wreck of his life, as he called it, upon his own shoulders. It was some balm, too, to her wounds, that he should tell her that he and his wife were virtually separated, and had been for years.

But when he followed this declaration up with a suggestion which not even his most delicate art of expression could keep delicate, that she should allow him to make the actual separation a legal one-to divorce his wife, in short, in order that he might marry her, Kate Crossett, she revolted.

It was characteristic, perhaps, of both

of them that the later afternoon should see them walking together in the park, enjoying each other's society, enjoying the day, the lights and shadows, the moving show, with that freshness, that keenness of enjoyment which follows a general purging of the emotions among the "temperamental." Certainly, there seemed to be no shadow upon their converse, and people walking, riding, and driving, pointed them out to one another, for billboards had made Kate's face a well-known one, and Allison's features had been given a wide publicity by the attentive Sunday press.

They were a distinguished-looking pair, and many heads were turned as they passed. They looked particularly and abominably cheerful, and interested in each other, in the eyes of a thin young man who was taking his afternoon exercise on his horse. He was rather nearsighted, and he had discarded his glasses during the hour's canter, so that he had to turn to look after them to make quite

sure who they were.

At any rate, he did turn to look at them, jerking his beast up short as he did so. And then one of the "who's who in New York" habitués of the mall remarked to another:

"That's young Ames-the new congressman. They say he works like a dog at it-politics. And he has oodles of money. I wish I had his chance."

CHAPTER VII.

It was Town Twaddle, that lively purveyor of news about people who do not wish to have it reported, that helped Mr. Allison Ware in the suit upon which he entered vigorously now-to win Kate's consent to the plan he had outlined.

At first she had refused to hear of it. He pointed out to her that, after all, her obstinacy, her Puritanism, her whatever-it-was, accomplished but one thing—his unhappiness. It did not help the little Englishwoman, growing old in her Kentish village; it did not give her the society which she had not had for fifteen years, and had not missed for twelve.

He had always supported her, of

course, he said magnificently; and, of That she course, he always would. herself had not long since applied for a divorce was merely because her provincial point of view was so behind the times, and also, perhaps, because she might foolishly believe that divorce would end her income. Let him go to her, let him explain to her the situation as it really was. For all he knew, for all Kate knew, divorce might prove as great a godsend to her in England as to him in America.

But Kate forbade such talk, and even occasionally enforced her injunctions against it. She gave him to understand that their intimate comradeship must soon end, instructing him that she really did not care for unconventional relations, but she obligingly kept deferring the date of its ending. And then along came Town Twaddle.

Town Twaddle, in a paragraph following an account of the opening of the Colorado Senator Sullivan's new palace in Washington, and preceding an account of Elliott Ames' maiden speech in Congress, printed a third, in which it stated that it knew upon the most reliable authority that Miss C-rn-l--S-ll-v-n, daughter of Senator S-ll-v-n, one of the millionaire lawmakers from a Western State, was engaged to a rising young New York politician, recently returned to the National Congress, Mr. Ell---t A---s. In order that the readers might have another clue by which to guess the identity of the New York congressman, it was added that all his friends would be particularly ready to congratulate him, upon the public announcement of this engagement, because of the unhappy outcome of a former matrimonial venture of his.

Kate read this veiled allusion, and was promptly and illogically very angry. She did not often trouble herself about Elliott, in these busy, flattered days of hers. Sometimes, when the familiar manners of her chief associates grated upon her a little, she had a flashing recollection of his reticences, his reserves. After all, she would say, living with a gentleman rather spoiled one for

living among mere men.

Sometimes when Allison's shiftlessness in the matter of work and in the matter of money irritated her, the inevitable comparison suggested itself with Elliott—whom she had been used to consider a very martinet in his devotion to work and in his business transactions.

Sometimes when the talk of the women with whom she was now chiefly associated irked and irritated her, she had a moment's kindly recollection of the once-hated committee meetings.

But, on the whole, she gave Elliott

little thought.

She was not particularly an analytical person, and she did not attempt to define what the overwhelming anger she felt upon reading that paragraph in Town Twaddle denoted in her. But anger she felt, anger and appalling desolation. The pleasant present was wiped out for the second, and she felt like a child, suddenly deserted by his playfellows, and, looking wrathfully around upon the spot where they have been, to discover that his guardians, too, have fled, and that he is alone in the universe.

It was the flush of rage that incarnadined her cheeks when she read the paragraph, and it was the tears of rage and self-pity that wet them when she flung herself at last upon Allison Ware's shoulder, and cried out that she was willing to do what he wanted; that she was so alone, so alone!

CHAPTER VIII.

"Twickenham Ferry" had only a lasting enough success to "save its face," as Greaves put it. Two months on Broadway, and then the road. There was nothing in it to warrant the hope that they might go on with it another year.

But Ware, a week or two after the secret understanding with Kate concerning their future, had brought a new scenario to Greaves. It embodied an idea which both gentlemen believed to be original. And the manager thought that if it were worked up in Allison's

best way, it would efface the half fail-

ure of the present play.

Allison was to bring the finished product to Greaves at a certain date. Kate, too, was enthusiastic over the new piece. Curiously enough, she found the necessity for all sorts of extraneous enthusiasms growing upon her as her engagement—if her understanding with Allison could be called by that name—progressed. Love most emphatically did not fill up her days.

Allison had made a flying trip to England to set in motion the machinery for obtaining his freedom from his wife. To Kate he urged this as an excuse for not having finished the work he had undertaken for Greaves in the specified time. Kate looked rather ominous.

"You know I've been writing you that he has something else up his sleeve,"

she said.

"He can't have anything as good," declared Allison, with the laughing air of self-mocking vanity which became him very well. "Besides which, of course, the future Mrs. Ware—"

"Please don't do that," interrupted

Kate sharply.

"Forgive me, my dear. I know I am a barbarian, devoid of good taste. But, you see, it happens to make me very happy to think those four words. I'll try not to offend again, however."

"Oh, I suppose I'm a nagging beast, and I ought to beg your pardon," said Kate contritely. "I seem to be one of those logical females who brazenly do the things they are ashamed to mention!"

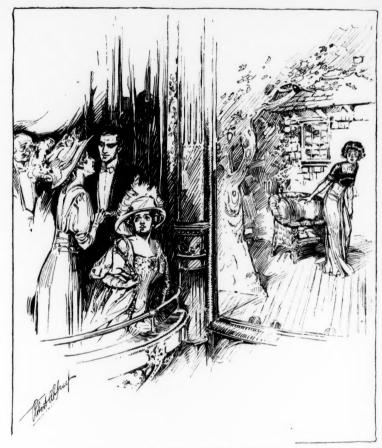
He silenced her with a kiss, and went on with voluble excuses for not having

finished the play.

They served more or less well with Kate—she had to be satisfied with them, and she really was enthusiastic about the plot and the character which she

was to impersonate.

Mr. Greaves, however, was not so easily managed. He had had another play submitted, upon which he was ready to stake his managerial reputation. Allison had already burdened him with one merely tepid success, and he felt under no particular obligations to



She noted a slim, flowerlike young girl, and, by her side, Elliot Ames.

that author. He bought the other play, at first maintaining that he was going to have one of the lesser stars appear in it, and then suddenly insisting that Kate should begin rehearsing in it.

Kate rebelled, and Allison rebelled. Theatrical tempers run high, once they are started. Within two weeks from the time when he had insisted that she begin rehearsing "Mayfair Number Nine," Kate had broken with him.

"She's dippy about that fake Ware,"

elegantly observed Mr. Greaves. "See the lemon that he handed to me last season! She'll wake up when it's too late. She had a clause in her contract that it could be terminated after two years, in case she were not allowed a voice in selecting her plays and companies. I was a ninny to let her have it, but I thought she'd have some gratitude, some reason, in her, seeing that she was not a professional. Well, she'll come to her senses some day—probably

when she's walking back from Kalamazoo. A woman that I made, mind you, and see the trick she plays me!"

Meantime, representatives from Sneed, and from Levy & Greenfeld, visited Miss Crossett, only to be informed that she thought of taking a rest, and would not consider any new

contracts until the fall.

This had been Allison's advice to her. He had had an intoxicating vision of himself, as not only a playwright, but a play producer; he saw a theatre which he managed, in which plays written by him were the chief entertainment offered a delighted public, and in which his wife—his prospective wife, not the unfortunate little woman in England, who was dazedly and obediently working to sunder the tie between them—should be the leading woman.

"If only we could get the money together, we could do it!" he would cry

exultantly.

"But neither of us is a business person, Allison, my dear," Kate would tell

him.

"Oh, don't talk that business man's nonsense, as though there was something special or sacred about it. Any man of intelligence who had the time to put his mind to it could do as well as these financial wizards. It's all a question of brains, and some of us have been turning ours to work that seems a little more important to us. But, of course, if we ever should get started on this venture, I'd leave off writing, for the time being, until I got the management well systematized!"

Kate looked a little doubtful, but she was beginning to find out that Allison was not the same pleasant person when contradicted that he was when one agreed with him. So she said noth-

ing.

A few months later, he came to her exultant over the progress of a new

scheme of his.

"Bentley is willing to back me—and you," he added so swiftly that it could be called an afterthought, "to the extent of twenty thousand. Now, all that we have to do is to get another backer for another twenty, and the thing's done.

With forty thousand in hand, I guarantee to give you the best play, with the best company and the best stage settings, that has been seen for a long time."

"I'm sure I wish I had twenty thousand," said Kate, with a little grimace.

"Well, surely you can get it, among your rich friends," answered Allison, a little impatiently.

"I shouldn't think of doing such a thing," was her emphatic reply.

"You have our joint interest warmly at heart, haven't you?" There was the frequent sneer in Allison's voice and on Allison's face.

"I still feel that I have some dignity of my own to maintain, although, perhaps, I have not much self-respect left,"

she responded bitterly.

She had the irritating feminine trick of bemoaning situations into which her own temerity had drawn her.

"You make my position a trifle hard,

Kate.'

Allison assumed a certain sorrowful gravity, which always brought Kate's penitence into action. She apologized, and they resumed the discussion of the ways and means of raising money.

In two or three days Allison succeeded in finding backers to the extent of the other twenty thousand dollars of which he felt the need. But there was the constraint in his manner of one who feels that he has been obliged to do a good deal more than his share in a joint undertaking.

Hartley Greaves, Sneed, Levy & Greenfeld, and all the syndicate men, and all the rebellious managers, smiled broadly when they saw the announcement of the outcome of Kate's tem-

porary retirement.

Miss Kate Crossett announces a new play by Allison Ware, entitled "The Silver Cord," which she will produce with her own company of players. She will open with a two weeks' engagement at the New National Theatre in Washington, D. C., beginning October oth.

"That means that she'll be ready to come and eat from my hand by December first, at the latest," observed Mr. Hartley Greaves. "Poor Kate! Such a gifted being, and such a blamed fool!"

CHAPTER IX.

Exactly why Kate, with a thousand worries burdening her mind, with engagements with costumers, scenic artists, property men, candidates for admission to her company, ladies who wished to give her luncheons of honor, and a hundred other people, should deliberately choose to go up to the House of Representatives one afternoon during the week before she opened in Washington, only the divinity which has special charge over women of impulse can tell.

She went alone, and rather heavily veiled.

It is a matter of record among the pages that she bestowed fifty cents upon one of them who did her the service of pointing out Representative Ames' desk. It was vacant at the time, and proceedings were altogether uninteresting. Men got up at times and droned forth speeches or remarks with the manner of gentlemen talking in their sleep. No one seemed to pay much attention to them, and Kate felt that politeness was a lost art, along with oratory, in the nation's capitol.

By and by she had the felicity of seeing Elliott go down the aisle to his desk, and begin reading some communications that pages had left there. She had an inspiring view of the back of his head, and it gave her a curious sensation of pity to discover that his hair was growing thin. Allison's distinguished gray locks were thick, and would have been curly if he had allowed them to grow long enough.

When she returned to the theatre, she found, of course, that not less than fifty people had been imperatively anxious to see her. Allison was in a high rage, and tried to take her publicly to task for deserting the post of duty.

Relations between them were strained almost to the point of snapping, and were only superficially restored by the opening, two nights later.

Kate's enthusiasm as an actress had been almost obliterated by her anxieties as a producer. She had been too harassed for too long a time to enter into the light and joyous spirit of Allison's latest heroine. Moreover, she had a sudden, sneaking suspicion that the light and joyous spirit of that young lady was that of a well-articulated French doll.

Even with all the disadvantages under which they labored, the chief one being, according to the next morning's critics, the inadequacy and occasional incoherence of the new play, the situation between Allison and Kate might have remained at least amicable, had it not been for an entrance during the first act into one of the boxes.

It was rather a gala occasion altogether, the President, with some of his aides and some of his guests of the evening, being present, and occupying two of the lower boxes, under a brilliant decoration of flags and banners. The performance had had to wait the arrival of the Presidential party before beginning, and this delay had put the nervous men and women almost literally on pins and needles.

But when the first act was well under way, there was another entrance, into a box opposite the Presidential party's, which was more disastrous to Kate. A party of six it was, and, somehow, her eyes were drawn toward them in the midst of one of her most telling scenes. She noted, half unseen, the stout and prosperous elders of the party, and then, among the juniors, a slim, flowerlike young girl, and, by her side, Elliott Ames.

She was not a trained enough actress to keep the shock of the second from affecting her. She halted, stumbled, could not recover herself for a perceptible moment. In the wings a panic almost seized the members of the company, who were watching the progress of the play. Fright and fury combined seized Allison.

Although Kate recovered herself in time, without the aid of the prompter, and although the audience kindly tried to make up to its favorite for her moment of humiliation, there was a bitter, tense scene between the lovers when Kate went off the stage.

"You ruined the act! You've spoiled my work!"

Allison did not need to curse her in language; his angry eyes and snarling lips were enough.

"Let me pass," said Kate, mastering

herself with difficulty.

She hated him with her whole heart in that moment, and she hated him all the more because her eyes were full of the slender girl in the box with Elliott. No later applause, no later seeming success, such as any first night of a favorite actress or playwright is bound to achieve, compensated for that moment.

After the performance Kate went immediately to her hotel, nor did Allison attempt to see her, or to apologize.

The next day he placed himself beyond the pale of her forgiveness by giving out an interview, after he had read the strictures on his drama, in which he pleasantly observed that he thought all fair-minded critics in the audience that night must have agreed that there was no opportunity of judging the play, because it had been so haltingly produced. He added an insulting remark, to the effect that the amateur was apt to be stampeded in an emergency.

The reporter who had obtained this gem for his evening paper hurried to Kate's hotel with it, to induce her to reply. By a severe effort of her will, she kept behind her lips the rejoinder that Allison Ware had never been heard of as a playwright until she had appeared in his first play, and contented herself with merely remarking, in the quietest possible tone, that she was sure Mr. Ware must have been misquoted or misunderstood, for she had never had any reason to regard him as other than a gentleman.

Two days later she had arranged with Hartley Greaves for the transfer of her managerial interest in the play to him, and for the substitution of another leading woman. She told that unbelieving manager that she was going to confine herself to chicken raising as a means of livelihood in the future.

Allison she had steadfastly refused to see, and had held no communication with him, except to send him back by registered mail all the gifts she had received from him.

So, in a fiasco more public, and in a humiliation more poignant, than that which had ended the first chapter of her career in womanhood, her second closed.

EPILOGUE.

Kate had had a dim recollection of peace connected with a farmhouse in the Virginia hills, where she and her mother had once spent a summer together. It was there, and not to the little house of sorrowful recollections at Huntoon's Point, that she decided to go after the collapse of all her high theatric hopes.

There she spent the winter, at first brooding upon the successive failures of her life, and gradually reaching a

healthier state of mind.

In the beginning, it seemed to her that the whole world must be ringing with the tale of her astonishing folly. By and by she began to be shrewdly aware that the world had other things with which to ring. From pitying herself as the special prey of a malignant fate, she grew, in time, to regard herself with a lenient humor, as a victim of her own headstrong impetuosity, her feminine vanity, and her feminine self-ishness.

And finally, among the hills, a chastened health of body and mind came back to her. She resolved no longer to hide there—for it was from an instinct of concealment that she had chosen them for her retreat—but to go back to her own place, and to make something at least useful, and at least moderately enjoyable, out of the remainder of her days.

In Washington she had only a few minutes in which to change trains. She was glad of it, for her cheeks still flushed hotly at the thought of her last appearance in that city. She pulled down her chiffon hat veil over the filmier face veil of net, as she crossed the station, and she signaled her maid to hurry with her bag.

The seat opposite hers, in the parlor car—Kate would always live en princesse as long as she had a dollar with which to purchase a minute of a princess' state—was already occupied with

a man's overcoat when she took her place. Elsie arranged a cushion at her back, placed a footstool before her, and fished some magazines from her portmanteau before going into the day coach behind her. But Kate did not raise the heavy cloud of chiffon until the outskirts of the city were passed and they were speeding through the country, just blossoming into spring green.

It happened that she lifted her hands to raise the veil at the moment when the owner of the overcoat on the opposite seat returned from the smoking car. He lurched against her upraised elbow, and, in the second of mutual apology,

their eyes met.

Kate's hands fell limply into her lap, her veil half hanging still. The man dropped into his seat as though he had been flung there by some external force, and they continued to stare at each other with widened eyes.

"Where did you go?" demanded Elliott Ames suddenly. "Last fall-after

-after-

"After my single phenomenal appearance as an actress-manager?" Kate tried to make her voice light. "I went into Virginia, to a place I knew, for a

rest. Why?'

"I looked for you—I wanted to find you. I thought"—he colored sensitively-"that there might be difficulties connected with ending up the business. I hope you won't think I was impertinent. I couldn't help wanting to be of service."

How fine and considerate, how strong and restful, he seemed! Kate's eyes shone with belated appreciation of his merits. She explained that, thanks to her old manager, she had not been in very sore straits.

Then awkward silence fell between

It was broken by Elliott's offer to remove himself and his belongings to the smoking car, if she desired it. She begged him not to trouble, and took up one of the magazines, as though she

contemplated reading it. But a question hovered upon her lips, and she could not repress it. Life would have to become a sterner schoolmistress yet with Kate Crossett to teach her not to vield to her impulses.

"I-I saw in the paper-that is, I heard a rumor-or somehow I gained the impression—that you were going to marry Miss Sullivan, of Colorado. Is it so?"

She tried very hard to keep her tones those of friendly interest. Elliott's face brightened, and she thought its brightness was due to Miss Cornelia Sullivan. A queer, new pain gripped her. It was not like the angry, overmastering jealousy which she had felt when she first read the report; but it seemed likely to be a more permanent guest in her heart. It was humble, chastened.

But what was it that he was say-

"Do you mean to say that it would make the least difference in the world to you if it were true?" he demanded, in a voice that somehow opened the gates of hope and happiness to her. "Oh, Kate," he went on, as her brimming eyes answered his question, "I would have given worlds to have been able to-to marry her, or any one," with reckless impartiality, "but I never could get even near it. You simply wouldn't let me."

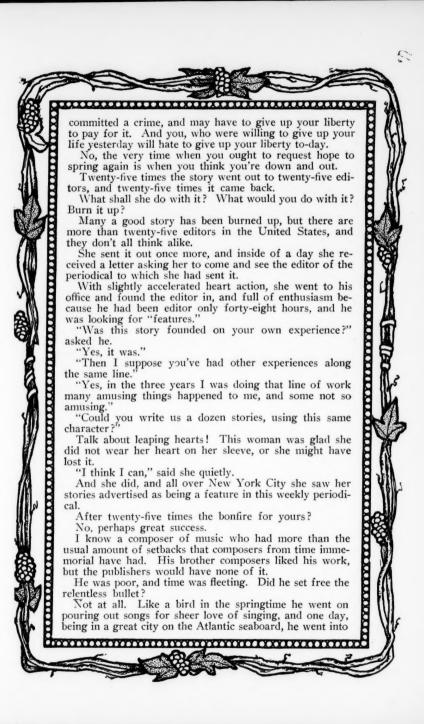
The next morning's papers had lively news wherewith to brighten the tale of strife, disaster, and crime with which their columns were loaded. "Divorced pair remarry: Camden, New Jersey, the scene of the second nuptials of Congressman Elliott Ames and Miss Kate Crossett, the actress," the headlines declared.

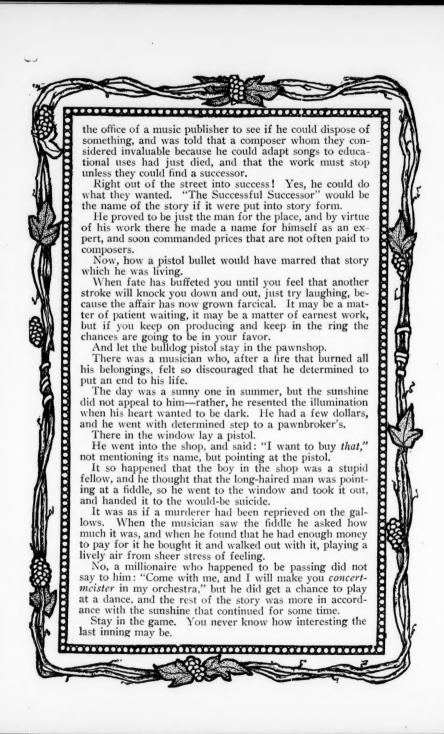
And so intelligent and lively interest does the world take in the personal affairs of its favorites that the chief wonder it expressed was contained in the words: "But why on earth at Camden,

New Jersey?"











Marrying Off Mary

By Edith Summers Updegraff

ILLUSTRATED BY R. EMMETT OWEN

HE alarm clock on the top of the old chest of drawers pointed to five minutes past eight when Mrs. MacBean burst suddenly into Mary's basement kitchen, her large, comely face aglow with the excitement caused by important and unexpected happenings.

"Mary, me child," she exclaimed, in that rich, North of Ireland brogue of hers that sounded more Scotch than Irish, "the twa o' thim's arrived this five minutes gone—druv up in a rubber tire, like princes!"

Mary was sitting in a decayed rocking-chair beside the range, making table napkins out of an old cloth.

"They?" she said inquiringly, lifting

her large, mild eyes.
"Ham, in course," gasped out Mrs.
MacBean breathlessly, "an' us no' lookin' for 'im for a week yit!" She dropped solidly into a worm-eaten chair, that creaked beneath her not inconsiderable "He's broucht anither man along wi' 'im," she continued, "a fri'nd o' hisn out there i' the West, as was wantin' to take a bit thrip East, an' see the worruld-a quiet, unassumin', decent sort o' man as iver I see."

From the first word of Mrs. Mac-Bean's explanation, a delicate, pink flush crept over the face of the younger woman, and her large, mild eyes grew suddenly luminous with a clear, inner glow. For the moment, her pale face

was transformed.

"They'll have had a long journey," was all she said.

"He's pinin' for to see ye, Mary, an'

so I says to thim to step in in a half hour or so, leavin' thim to mind the shop; a bakeshop is a sore thrial an' a care, if iver there was one. I thought I'd come right on in an' tell ye first, for I knowed ye'd be wantin' to be perpared, an' look yer best. I'm glad ye've got on that gray dhress; it suits ye fine. Ham looks some younger an' smarter than I thought he wad; I've no seen 'im this twinty year."

The pink color ebbed out of Mary's face, and left her thin features paler

than ever.

"Perhaps," she ventured hesitatingly, "perhaps-when he sees me-he'llthink better of it, Mrs. MacBean. I'm not much to look at, you know-nor young. And that photograph you sent him flattered me, you know it did Maybe he won't like me, after all."

"Nonsense, ye foolish child, non-sense! Ye're niver happy but whin ye're thinkin' ill o' yersel'. He'll be proud to git ye, an' ony man micht. It's amazin' to me to see the men that blind that they canna tell the makin's o' a gude wife whin they clap eyes on her! Did ony man iver ask ye in marriage afore Ham, Mary?"

"No," said Mary, her eyes bent on

her sewing.

"There, thin's, the proof on't! They're blind as bats, an' waur! An' ye must o' been a real bonny-lookin' girl in ver younger days, Mary, afore this ongodly livin' in basements made ye pale an' tender, like a onion a-sproutin' awa' in a cellar. Ye'll grow bonny



The long, loose-jointed man hung back behind the other.

ag'in, too, i' the good counthry air. Ye're too quiet an' self-abnegatin', that's why they niver rinned afther ye. They likes to be led on, like a bit kitty afther a empty salmon can. Think o' leavin' a woman like you, that's got a big, warm, mother heart i' her breast, to live alone be hersel' wi'out chick nor child, cleanin', an' sweepin', an' dustin', world wi'out end in a boardin' house here i' this godless Noo Yark town, for jist enough to keep vittles i' her body! It's a sad an' dreary life ye been leadin', Mary, an' ye deserve betther."

"Oh, I haven't been so badly off, Mrs, MacBean," said Mary deprecatingly. "I couldn't be, with such a good friend as you."

She paused a moment, looking down at the table napkin in her lap and fingering it nervously.

"I—I've never whispered a word about this to anybody before," she went on, dropping her voice to a half-ashamed

murmur, "but somehow I don't mind telling you that I have felt it a good deal—never being asked by any man, you know. I read once in a book that there never was a woman who hadn't had a chance to marry in her life, and it made me feel as though I hadn't any right to be living at all. And now it seems too wonderful to think of your having arranged it all like this between Ham and me."

"Nothin' more nateral, me dear. Ham was a lone bachelor, wi' a bit money saved up, an' wantin' to settle down. You was the verra woman for 'im. An' so I got ye correspondin', an' you liked his letthers, an' he liked yourn, an' the rest come o' itsel'. The Lord an' nater done it all, Mary; it's none o' my makin'."

"It seems strange, doesn't it, that we should have grown to care so much for each other—just from letters?"

Mrs. MacBean did not appear to no-

tice this last remark. She was busy finding the pocket in the skirt of her clean cotton dress. She managed to locate it at last, and drew from it a small, flat package, carefully wrapped in

tissue paper.

"I thought I'd jist bring this in for ye, Mary; an' if I was you I'd wear it the nicht. It was wore be me on me weddin' day this thirty year back, whin I married MacBean, that's dead an' gone o' kidney throuble an' hard drinkin' long since, rest his puir soul! Thim lace scarfs is michty becomin'; ye dhrape thim round yer shouldhers, ye know, an' they make a woman look distangy, as the Frinch call't. An' I thought this bit o' pink ribbin 'u'd look nice on yer neck. It'll gi'e ye a bit more color, ye know, an' color is allus liked be men, same as be savages an' wild Injuns.'

She draped the lace scarf about Mary's rather narrow shoulders, and tied the pink bow under her chin with care and precision. The limp, yellow, thirty-years-folded lace and the bit of crude pink ribbon, fresh from the nearest dry-goods store, looked strange in each other's company, but neither of

the two women noticed it.

"You're altogether too good to me, Mrs. MacBean," said Mary, going over to the little kitchen mirror and fondly fingering the lace and ribbon. "They look most too pretty for a woman like

me-thirty-five past."

"Hush, now, wi' talkin' about yer age. Many's a woman at your time o' life's a girl in looks these days whin wimmin' is so well preserved, an' no reason why they shouldn't be, nor you, too. Though I've no pertickler patience wi' thim as is allus dustin' their mugs wi' powder, an' rubbin' grease into their skins ivery nicht o' their lives, an' a' that foolishness. Whisht! There they be a rappin', now!"

She crossed to the door, and opened it to admit two men, one rather below medium height, stout and broad-faced; the other long, lean, and loose-jointed. Both men were shaved, and hair-oiled, and carefully dressed in celluloid collars, creaking new shoes, and "boughten" suits. The long, loose-jointed man

hung back behind the other somewhat, as though mindful of the fact that his

was not an important rôle.

"This, Mary," said Mrs. MacBean, indicating the short, stout man with a sweep of her plump arm, "is me cousin be marriage, Hamilton MacBean, that's come a' the way frae Newbrasky to tak' ye back home wi' 'im. An' this here is his fri'nd, Mr. Jim Hawkins. Gintlemen both, allow me to presint ye to Miss Mary Campbell."

Mary came forward, blushing painfully. The two men shook her by the hand with awkward vigorousness, then sank into the chairs set for them. Mr. Jim Hawkins stared uncomfortably at the ceiling, and Mr. Hamilton MacBean

straight at Mary.

"Ye'll have had a long thrip on the cars," said Mrs. MacBean, to break the

oppressive silence.

"We have that, but not too long," returned Ham. "There's nothin' so educatin' an' beneficial to a open-minded man, I've always said, as travel. I've done a great deal o' travelin' myself—twice I've been on the cars for four days hand runnin', besides comin' out from Scotland on a steamer at the age o' five. An' I'm a better man for't—a better man for't!"

Mrs. MacBean stirred uneasily in her chair. Ham stretched out his legs, and blew his nose violently on his new redbordered handkerchief, still keeping his

eyes fixed on Mary.

"It's demoralizin' to some—travel is," he continued, "though not when one's got good, sound Scotch principles back o' him. If I do say it myself—an' I'm no one to blow my own horn—I've always been a good, moral, God-fearin' man, an' a member o' the church. Are ye a church member, Mary?"

"My name's on the books of the Presbyterian Church on Nineteenth Street," said Mary, a warm flush suffusing her face under Ham's steady gaze. "And I love to go, though I can't get to do so as often as I would like, what with the beds to make up and rooms to get tidy on Sunday morning."

"Ye should never let a chance escape to worship God," said Ham sententiously. "An' public worship is the best an' most satisfyin' to the soul. Are ye en-

joyin' good health?"

"I'm right strong," said Mary, "though not what I was when younger. Bein' so much in the basement is hard

on a body, they say."

"Health's a great blessin'," said Ham, "an' should be treasured as the apple o' yer eye. It's a special great blessin' in a woman, for it goes with beauty an' bringin' healthy children into the world. An' the finest handiwork o' the Creator, I maintain, is a beautiful, healthy young mother an' her innocent child." "It weakens the mind an' soul, a city rearin'," said Ham, "not to mention the body. Are ye shure ye feel that ye would care for the country, Mary?"

"Perhaps, after all, I shouldn't like it," said Mary, reddening again, and keeping her eyes on her embroidery. "One can never be sure."

The half-suppressed tremble in her

voice escaped none but Ham.

"It's well to be sure," said Ham, recrossing his legs.

Mr. Jim Hawkins, sitting far back in the shadow, now spoke up:

"Mebbe the ladies 'u'd like to hear



And then he launched forth into a retail of adventures and deeds of vrowess with himself as hero.

The delicate prudery of the old maid swept over Mary's face in a flush of embarrassment. She bent her head, and took several very careful stitches in the piece of embroidery that she had taken up.

up.
"I've nae doubt the West's a fine counthry," interpolated Mrs. MacBean,

in an expressionless tone.

"Yes, it's a fine country—a fine country—free, an' wide, an' inspirin' to the soul. Are ye fond o' a country life, Mary? Have ye had any experience o' livin' on a farm?"

"Not since I was twelve years old," returned Mary, "though I've often wished I could go back to it. I've lived

mostly in the city."

somethin' abaout what ranchin' out West's like," he drawled, in a leisurely Yankee fashion. "Tell 'em abaout some o' your adventures, Ham—the time ye rode twenty hours stiddy through bush country trailin' them hoss thieves, or the day ye met the grizzly out walkin'."

"I doubt if wimmin's got the intellect or imagination to understand such things, Jim; but maybe the horse-thief story might possibly prove interestin' to them. Ye see, it was this way."

And Ham launched forth into a relation of adventures and deeds of prowess, with himself as hero, that kept him occupied until the alarm clock on the chest of drawers pointed to eleven.

"It's time to be goin'," said Mrs. Mac-



Mrs. MacBean turned on him suddenly, and gave him her undivided attention.

Bean, rising suddenly in the midst of Ham's long periods. "We should a' be in our beds long since. Mary an' me both has to be up bright an' airly i' the mornin', whativer idle men may be doin'. Say gude nicht, an' bundle yerselves forth."

She lingered a moment after the two men had given Mary good evening, and gone out of the door.

"How d'ye like 'im, Mary?" she inquired, in a whisper,

Mary's face was as white as the white lace scarf about her shoulders.

"It's as I feared, Mrs. MacBean," she said quietly. "I'm cut out for an old maid. You see how it is, I'll never do for him."

"Not do fer 'im? What nonsense are ye talkin' there? Why, I can see he's entirely took up wi' ye! Don't ye go to mistakin' them things he said, an' questions he ast ye, an' a' that; that's jist his way. He's clean daft on ye, I tell ye. Ye've lived that much alone that ye dinna undherstand folks. Thrust to one that knows the ways o' men, Mary, me girl, an' believe what I'm afther tellin' ye."

The pitiful, white look in Mary's face

The pitiful, white look in Mary's face became half incredulous, half hopeful. "Oh, Mrs. MacBean," she murmured, "I'm not good enough for him, anyway. He's so good, and moral, and brave, and can do so many things, and knows so much! And doesn't he talk fine?"

"Aye, he talks fine," said Mrs. Mac-

"May the good Lord forgi'e me for lyin'!" she muttered to herself, as she followed the two men back to the bakeshop. "But, onyway, I'd rather lie mesel' black i' the face nor hurt her tender feelin's. It's me that's got things into a fine bit pickle, well-meanin' fule that I was, to judge a man be 's letthers.'

Ham hung about Mrs. MacBean's little sitting room after Mr. Jim Hawkins had left for bed. He seemed uneasy and perturbed, and cleared his throat several times. Mrs. MacBean, carefully gathering up newspapers, and burned matches, and "sich like male dirt," appeared not to notice that he was still

there.

"I'm thinkin'," he said at last, after a loud ahem, "I'm thinkin' that perhaps Mary isn't, after all, the woman for

"What's lackin' in 'er?" inquired his cousin, putting the newspapers in a neat pile on the center table.

"She don't look as strong an' hearty as a rancher's wife ought to look-she's

some pale an' peaked.

"Ye admire the milkmaid style," commented Mrs. MacBean. "Most men does."

"I'm thirty-nine-an' she's thirty-five, ye say. Well, she's younger-but not much. A woman ought to be a good deal younger. Many's a young woman o' five an' twenty would look at me,

"It's well ye think so," said Mrs. Mac-Bean, energetically winding up the man-

telpiece clock.

'Hawkins is lookin' for a wife, too,"

hazarded Ham.

Mrs. MacBean turned on him suddenly, and gave him her undivided atten-

tion.

"Hamilton MacBean," she said, looking him squarely in the eyes, "ye've promist Mary to marry her, an' a Scotchman's promise, I've allus heard, is as good as his bond. Though there's thim in Ireland that's as good as the Scotch, ony day, an' no so braggin' about it, neither. A bargain's a bargain, an' ye've got to stick to't, if ye're a man.

She, bein' a weak woman, an' some pertickler, may not want to tak ye, afther seein' to-nicht what a thick-headed. boastful, braggin', selfish lot ve are. I say, she may not be willin' to tak' ve afther meetin' ye, an' I'd no be the one to blame 'er. But, onyway, ye've got to go in there to-morrow, an' ast her to name the day, an' be humble an' cravin' about it, too, lest ye git the mittin.'

Ham drew himself up, affronted and

dignified.

'I've never been known not to fulfill a promise when it was expected o' me, Martha," he said pompously. "A bargain's a bargain, as ye say, an' Hamilton MacBean's word's as good as his oath any day. I only thought she might

be willin' to take Hawkins.

The next morning Mrs. MacBean was an early caller in Mary's basement kitchen. Mary, washing out towels and pillow slips at the stationary tubs, had the same half-doubtful, half-happy look on her face that Mrs. MacBean's courageous lie had brought there the night before.

"It's ill news I've got for ye this mornin', Mary, me girl," said Mrs. Mac-Bean, sinking into one of the old, creaky

rocking-chairs.

The younger woman's slight body shrank together, as though it were recoiling from a blow, and her face seemed to grow gray in the dim light.

"Ham dhrinks!"

A relaxing wave of relief passed over Mary's tense face.

"Is that all?" she said, with a little

laugh.

"Is that a'?" echoed Mrs. MacBean. "Do ye no think it's enough? He dhrinks, I tell ye! I'm no sayin' how I found it out, but I know it for sartin shure. He goes off on tipsy sprees, an' sops, an' souses, an' gulps it down like wather. Ye can niver marry a man as dhrinks, Mary; it's no moral."
"Why not?" returned Mary. "If only

he cares for me? I might help him to

overcome it."

"He cares for ye, a' richt, an' is crazy to have ye name the day. But, I tell ye, I'll no have ye throw yersel' awa' on a dhrunkard. I feel mesel' responsible

for 't, Mary. I got ye into 't, an' now I'm goin' to git ye out o't. Ye must forgit ye were iver ingaged to Ham; he's no for ony woman to marry, let alone you, and I canna let ye do 't."

"Do you really think he cares for me, Mrs. MacBean? I felt sure last night he was disappointed in me, and wouldn't want to marry me—a fine-speaking man

like him."

"He's fine-speakin' enough; and, as I was tellin' ye, he's crazy to have ye name the day. But I willna let ye marry a dhrunkard. If I hadna got ye in for it, I'd 'a' had no business to interfere; but I got him, an' I'm goin' to tak' him awa'. There'll be no dhrunken marriages o' my makin'! Will ye promise me to refuse 'im, Mary?"

"As you say, Mrs. MacBean," returned Mary, in a colorless tone, returning to her washtubs, "you got him, and you have a right to take him away. I—I'll refuse him, if you say so."

"I can depend on yer word, Mary; I k n o w it's good as gold. Ye're a fine woman, though quiet, an' retirin', an' some inexperienced o' life, an' ye'll be made

happy i' the long run. I know ye're feelin' bad, Mary," she continued, putting a sympathetic hand on the younger woman's shoulder. "Ye've been lonely these many years, an' ye was lookin' forward to havin' a husband an' a home at last, like ither wimmin, an' it's real hard on ye to have to go back to the old, dreary way. But it's a' for the best, an' it'll come richt i' the end; thrust to Providence, that takes care o' thim that's deservin'. Now, I must git

back, for I hear the bread man a-hammerin' on the side door, an' the pies is like enough burnin' to a crisp i' the oven, an' neither o' thim good-for-nothin' men stirrin' hand or foot to tak' 'em out."

In the bakeshop she found Mr. Jim Hawkins making himself useful by putting up some additional shelves, that she had been needing for a long time. Two or three customers were waiting. She



"She's refused me, Martha."

served them with their bread, and coffeecake, and doughnuts, and then bustled out into the rear room to look after the pies, and mix up some cake batter. When the batter was made, and the cakes in the oven, she came back into the shop, to find Mr. Hawkins surveying his completed task with a workman's satisfaction in a neat job.

"Ye've done fine," said Mrs. Mac-Bean, looking at the shelves with an approving eye. "Ye're oncommon handy, for a man, an' not near so

puffed up wi' conceit as most.'

"Thanks," returned Mr. Hawkins. Then, after a long pause: "That young woman, Mary, that's bespoke to Ham, is a remarkable nice, pleasant young woman, ain't she?"

"She is that," returned Mrs. Mac-Bean, "an' more. Are ye thinkin' o' settlin' down yersel', Mr. Hawkins?"

"I was meditatin' that way some,"

said Mr. Hawkins.

"To my way o' thinkin'." commented Mrs. MacBean, "yer real, native-born American citizen makes the best husband that's to be had."

"Thanks," said Mr. Hawkins again.

At this moment the door was slowly opened, and Ham appeared, looking about as crestfallen as a rooster fished out of a rain barrel. Mr. Hawkins dis-

creetly withdrew.

"She's refused me, Martha," said Ham, falling limply into a chair. feel low-spirited about it. I never felt I wanted much to marry her till she said no, an' then I was clean daft to get her. But, if ye'll believe me, she wadna change her mind, though I pleaded long an' ably. Wimmin's queer creatures! What's lackin' in me, Martha, that she willna have me?'

"It's no use tellin' ye, Ham; me worruds wad be but wasted. There's thim as sees an' undherstands things, an' thim as don't-an' ye're one o' thim as don't. Why, man, ye oucht be rights to be singin' fer joy! Ye're free now to hunt up a young an' buxom wife afther yer own heart; an', instead o' that, ye're sittin' here grievin'. Men's queer critters!"

She left him, still sitting limply in the chair, and hurried out into the rear room to see after the cakes. Mr. Jim Hawkins was standing looking out of

the window.

"Mary's refused Ham," said Mrs. MacBean, carefully inserting a straw into one of the cakes. "She's some disappointed in 'im, I guess. She'll git over it gradual, though, an' turn to somebody else; they allus does, an' richt that they should. Mary's too good an' sweet a woman to be left single.

She ambled over to where Mr. Hawkins stood, and looked out beside him. From the window could be seen the back yard of Mary's house. Mary with a face very white and tense, but with a clear, inner glow of blessedness in her large gray eyes, was hanging out towels and pillow slips on the line.

"She's a nice sort o' woman-mighty

nice," said Mr. Hawkins meditatively.
"She is that," returned Mrs. Mac-Bean. "Are ye stayin' i' Noo York fer long?"

"I think I'll mebbe stop a while,"

drawled Mr. Hawkins.



The Answers

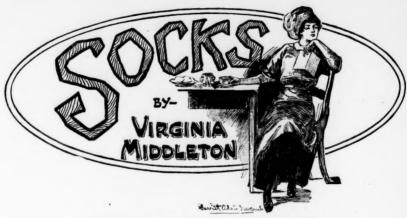
ASKED of the stars what love might be. "Love is adoring," they answered me.

I asked of the wind that wandered by. "Love is a seeking," it made reply.

I asked of the rose in the garden way. "Love is a rapture," the rose did say.

I asked of the sea on the moaning shore. "A pain and a longing forevermore."

I asked of a woman's loyal heart. "Love is a service," she said apart. L. M. MONTGOMERY.



ILLUSTRATED BY HARRIET ADAIR NEWCOMB

THERESA, pricking her left fore-finger gorily with the long, sharp darning needle, threw the ragged, black sock upon the floor and began to cry. That awkward stab was the culmination of her wrongs, the traditional last straw that broke the back of her submission. She was done with darning, she was done with domestic drudgery! She was going back to work. Walter must permit it. Permit? Who was Walter to deny, to allow, to be the ruler of her activities? Was he a Turkish pasha? Was she a veiled slave? She was going back to work!

She arose from the little sewing chair in which she had been sitting for the loathed task of mending. Her soft, red lips were drawn taut in a line of bitterness, the pettish tears that had veiled her gray eyes were dried out in the fire of her determination. She was going back to work! And if that meant that she was going to part from Walter-well, let it mean that! It would be his ultimatum, not hers. If he refused to live with her merely because she declined longer to submit to his unreasoning tyranny-so be it! And the red line of her lips grew thinner and harder.

"I could keep a girl, give out the washing and the mending," she said aloud, as she had so often said to Wal-

ter, when pleading her cause, "and still have ten dollars a week left for all sorts of things. The Brownleys will take me back for eighteen any time—they can't bear Miss Dyer. We could go to the theater, out to little dinners, have some of the good times we used to have before we were married."

She heard her husband's key in the door of the apartment, and wheeled about from the window to face him. Her resolution burned in a carmine flush upon her cheeks. She looked very pretty, very domestic, standing there, exquisitely neat, with her pert sewing apron protecting her pale-blue linen skirt, and long white cuffs drawn over the sleeves of her blouse. Theresa had retained, through her two years of unhappy, protesting housewifery, the bright, immaculate precision of costume which had made her so attractive a figure when she had been the chief of the Brownleys' secretarial force. Walter, who seemed a little tired and shabby, brightened at sight of her.

"Hello, Tess, you look as fresh as the advertisement of a new food," he informed her.

"Thank you, kind sir."

Theresa dropped him a little curtsy, before lifting her face for a kiss. Her heart was hammering against the crisp blue linen blouse with the greatness of

her resolution, but she wanted to proceed in an orderly, tactful manner. She hoped Walter would be reasonable. Why, it was as much for his sake as for her own that she wanted to go back to work. If he weren't so hampered by the dull necessity of meeting the inevitable, recurring debts, he needn't give half his time to Lewis and Ramsey for that wretched pittance of a salary; he could-

"Take me out to dinner to-night, Walter?" she interrupted her fluent, silent Walter was freself-justification. quently amenable to suggestion after a

gay, care-free evening.

"Why, Tess, isn't there any dinner in

the house?"

"Yes, there's cold meat and salad, and cheese and fruit. But it will all keep, and I want to go out. I'm so tired of my own dinners, Walter!"

"Sorry, dear, but we can't do it." He turned an empty pocket inside out. "Paid the rent of my desk room in Wainwright's office to-day, and there's only a dollar left for car fares until Friday, when L and R, bless 'em, cough up! Come on, let's set the table.

She drew back, tense and obstinate. The carmine had faded from her cheeks, and she was very pale.

"Walter," she said, "you must let me go back to work. I-I can't stand this

any longer."

Walter's mouth was boyishly mobile. It assumed the sudden wistfulness of But his jaw was not a hurt child's. bovish.

"Theresa, why do you bring up that subject again? We have been over it so many times in the past year. We

have nothing new to say."

"Yes, we have. Or I have!" cried the gir! hotly. "I have this to say—I am going back to work! I hate house-keeping! I hate mending! I hate the loneliness of the long days with you away! I hate never having enough money to do anything—anything—I want! I am a good business woman. I supported myself for seven years before we were married. I like business. I am trained for it. With the money I could earn, I could hire other

women to do for us here at home the things I am not trained for-and that they are. The days are so long-the drudgery is so meaningless-it's all so lonely!"

"It need not be so lonely," he answered, with measured accusation in his

level voice.

"Do you think that I am going to bring children into the world to share this miserable, skimped living?" she cried, with swift, angry understanding. "What shall we educate them on-the money you've just paid for your desk room, or the dollar that is to do for car fares the rest of the week?"

"I shall not always be so hard up." There was more of apology, more of appeal, than of assurance in the words. But she caught at them swiftly.

"Of course you won't, Walter! Of course, of course you won't! It's just for a little while, a little, teentyweenty mite of a while, just while you're getting established, that I'm going to help. I'm going back to the Brownleys.

Her hands were clasped cajolingly upon his arm, her eager face smiled up into his somber one. He unloosed her

fingers.

You're not going to help me, Tessie," he told her. He seemed cold and formal in his manner. "If you are so bitterly dissatisfied with the provision I am able to make for you-well-He finished with a gesture of proud renunciation: "I am sorry I seem to be something of a failure. But I am not going to permit my wife to work in any office, not while I have strength to earn a dollar and a half a day digging ditches. And I still have that, even if I'm not holding many briefs as a lawyer yet."

"You care a great deal about my wishes!"

"You care a great deal about my

dignity!"

"I've stood it as long as I will stand it!" cried Theresa. "You're tyrannical. you're silly! You waste my ability, you pin me down to what I hate-what I loathe, I tell you! There is nothing in all the world I detest as I do the

sight of your socks, waiting to be mended." She indicated the sewing basket on the table behind her. "I hate them! I could do murder when I look at that pile! I will not stand it. I'm going back to work at the Brownleys' next week."

"You know what it means if you do?"

"What does it mean?" She defied him to say the words.

"It means that we separate. I can't argue about it. Maybe you're right, maybe I'm unreasonable, tyrannical. But my wife cannot go out to work, not while I am able-bodied. If you are so dissatisfied with what I can do for you that you want to leave me-well and good. I shan't try to keep you against your wish. But the other I will not have."

"It's the end, then," she told him stonily, and turned toward their room.

"Where are you going?"

"After my hat."

"Theresa, don't be foolish. Don't decide recklessly.'

"I've been coming to this decision for two years."

"Even so, there is no need of melodrama. I'll be the one to go. That will make it easier for you by and by -when you come to getting the-the divorce. It will be desertion. Let me see—this is the fourteenth of July; the flat is leased until October, and the rent has been paid. Miss Loiseau was hard

prudent to pay it when we had the money. You will stay in it-"I shall pay for it then," interrupted Theresa proudly. "But you will have to wait until I go back to work. I tell you I won't stay in it unless I can pay

pressed, as usual, and it seemed to me

you back the rent." Her voice rose shrilly as she read rejection in his face. He temporized.

"We can discuss terms later, when the actual business is to be done. Now, for Heaven's sake, let us go into the kitchen and get something to eat.'

As she spread the simple meal, wondering that he could have the appetite to eat at such a crisis in his life, there

was a dull, hot rebellion in her heart. Selfish, insistent upon his own way, blind to all but his own point of viewshe was glad that they were to separate! When all that she had asked him was the liberty to use her gifts. her training, for their common good! The food choked her-she left the table abruptly. He followed her, his eyes beacons of hope; perhaps she would yield, perhaps he would find her in

She was weeping truly, but she scorched him through her tears with an angry look.

"I cannot tell you how utterly abominable you are to me," she cried stormily. He turned, and by and by she heard the door close after him.

It was natural, of course, that Wainwright should manage the negotiations for Walter. Wainwright and he had been chums at the same fresh-water college; it was in Wainwright's extensive, if bare, suite of offices that Walter had his modest desk, partitioned off from many other desks by a wall of sealed boards reaching not quite to the ceiling. There any persons who needed it might obtain, from two o'clock in the afternoon until six, and from eight until whatever hour they chose, advice in that branch of the law which was Walter's specialty, and in which the prosperous Wainwright, winning renown in the criminal courts, had no interest.

Walter's mornings belonged to Lewis and Ramsey, over in the big hive of lawyers near the courthouse. It would not have been natural for Walter to turn over to them the miserable business of the divorce proceedings; they were great men, attorneys for all the half-dozen railroads and express companies that coagulated in Marmion before flowing out again in a half-dozen new directions; they would not be likely to bother with a part-time clerk's domestic trials, even if the part-time clerk desired that they should.

But Walter, impractical boy, as Theresa impatiently called him to herself, reading Wainwright's letter—Walter would not desire it. He didn't care for their line of practice; he had some peculiar, idealistic dream of serving the interests of the people; and whatever else might be said to the credit of Lewis and Ramsey, no one had ever been heard to compliment them on their

condition of things, Mr. Hinsdale feels, must be trying to you, and he will be glad to help you end it. Very truly yours, CHARLES S. WAINWRIGHT.

And underneath the typewritten words was Charlie Wainwright's own scrawl:

Oh, Mrs. Tessie, I did hope that you and



"There is nothing in all the world I detest as I do the sight of your socks, waiting to be mended."

service of the people. It was natural that Wainwright should be the one.
Tessie read the letter again.

22 Blackstone Block, Marmion, October 19, 1910.

My Dear Mrs. Hinsdale: Will you kindly appoint a time when I may see you or your attorney relative to the matter of completing, legally, the separation in which you and your husband, Mr. Walter Hinsdale, are at present living? My client is anxious to facilitate your wishes and plans in every proper way, and if I may have a reply designating when and where I may see you or your accredited representative in the matter, I think we can bring it to a sufficiently speedy conclusion. The present anomalous

Walter would have come to your senses by this time. But if you won't, you won't, and there's an end on't.

Theresa had let herself into the empty little flat, and had lit the gas in the hall; no one could tell how miserable to her was the dreary home-coming in the gray autumn evenings. Until that hall gas was lit each evening she held her breath, expecting all sorts of horrors.

But to-night she had borne the horror in her hand, in the shape of the envelope with Wainwright's name and address in the corner. She had known

what that meant, even before she had paused under the gas jet to read it. A look of hardness replaced the eagerness on her face as she finished. She would not acknowledge to herself that she hoped Wainwright's letter was to tell her of Walter's capitulation to her terms—her reasonable terms!

She hurried back into the little kitchen, and lit the gas stove, and put the kettle on to boil. She would heat the canned soup, and brown last night's cold mashed potatoes; those, with cold meat and bread and butter and coffee, would serve her for dinner. She was glad that Walter did not know of her experiences with the succession of cooks and "generals" into whose hands she had put her domestic affairs after going back to the Brownleys'-the stolen spoons and bed linen, the family parties entertained at odd hours, the bill run up in her name at Mr. Conravey's emporium for the distribution of distilled and malt liquors at the corner.

Of course, Tessie still knew that the good, honest, obliging, efficient woman of her old dreams was somewhere upon the earth's surface; some day, when she had more time, and when this wretched business of ridding herself of her legal hold upon Walter was disposed of, she would find that woman.

Meantime it was easier to turn her key upon an empty, hastily half-cleaned house each morning, and come home to the same thing each evening, than to put up with the vagaries of the girls who were obviously not the good, honest, obliging, efficient one of her loyal fancy.

"Lawyer?" she murmured, as she ate her unappetizing meal, and reread Wainwright's letter. "Who on earth shall I have? I don't know any lawyers except Wainwright himself and Walter. I don't suppose it's etiquette for a woman to have her husband conduct her suit for divorce from him—and probably it's not law, either. I'll get Charlie Wainwright to call in somebody—like one second in a duel looking up a second for the other duelist. There'll be little enough for any one to

do. I don't want any allowance—I won't have it. And I want Walter to have all the things that were his mother's out of the flat. There's very little for any lawyer to do for me."

She piled the dishes in the porcelain sink that had been the particular pride of her first three weeks of married life. She felt too tired to wash them that evening; and it didn't matter if they weren't washed until kingdom come; she had so little company. All the other girls at Brownleys' were engaged, or "keeping company," or taken up in some evening-absorbing way. No one was likely to break in upon her untidy solitude with a demand for something cooked in a chafing dish, or for a bedtime salad. "The evenings are so lonely, so monotonous!" she told herself.

This one she occupied in replying to Charlie Wainwright. Three replies she tore up. The fourth was of classic brevity.

I'll come to your office at nine o'clock Thursday morning.

This was Tuesday. There would be a day to live through before she could place in the hands of her husband's attorney the back rent for the apartment, lodge in his understanding the fact that she would accept no support from Walter, and request his advice as to a suitable lawyer to manage her side of the affair.

At nine o'clock on Thursday the ancient elevator of the Blackstone Block creaked slowly up with her to Wainwright's offices on the fifth floor. The Brownleys, half divining, half demanding, the reason for her forenoon's absence, were glad enough to accord it. They had lived in nervous expectation of the day when Theresa and her husband should become reconciled, and they should be once more the prey of the recent graduates of the Marmion Business College, Positions Guaranteed in Three Months.

There was confusion in Wain-wright's office. He himself, rotund and rosy, shaking a deprecatory head at her, merely rushed into the alleged re-

ception room of the suite, to beg her indulgence for half an hour or so.

"You saw in the paper of the Langley murder?" he asked in explanation. "No? Oh, Mrs. Tess, Mrs. Tess, I thought all modern women read the morning newspaper as religiously as the old-fashioned ones read their Bible. Well, there was a murder at Langley's last night—Louis Langley's. And he's held on suspicion, and they want to retain your humble servant, the eloquent C. Demosthenes Wainwright, for his defense. I'll be with you in less than half an hour if you can wait."

"I can wait," replied Theresa gloom-

ily.

She felt a singular lack of interest in the murder at the Langleys'; the murder of half the town would have seemed to her a small thing in com-

parison with her own affairs,

The reception room became crowded with all sorts of people—Langley servants, court hangers-on, clients come to consult Wainwright on other business. She happened to be the only woman there. She felt conspicuous. She wished that Charles Wainwright would hurry.

Instead Charles sent a polite office boy with neat hair slicked away from a prominent forehead. Mr. Wainwright's apologies for his continued delay, and would Mrs. Hinsdale perhaps like to sit in one of the other offices

where she could be alone?

Mrs. Hinsdale would like it, and the polite office boy forthwith led her down the narrow, uncarpeted wooden hall—Marmion had not yet grown up to date in the matter of office buildings—to a small pen labeled on its hall door "Mr. Ross." He, Tessie recalled, was the chief of Wainwright's forces. As the polite boy opened the door for her, she saw that the next pen bore her husband's name upon its ground-glass panel.

Mr. Ross' room was furnished scantily with a roll-top desk, a swivel chair, a straight chair, and a shelf set out with a long row of letter files. The partition which separated this abode of unassuming labor from Walter's pen

extended nearly, but not quite, to the

ceiling.

Tessie was seized with a great desire to know how Walter's independent business was progressing on the other side of that wall; she hoped, with a passion surprising even to herself, that it was prospering greatly, that he would soon be able to escape the salaried drudgery for Lewis and Ramsey, that his ability and industry were gradually growing into their due reward. She wondered if his pen would give any indication of the state of his legal business.

Of course, she did not wonder inactively for any length of time. She crept to the communicating door, softly turned the knob, and opened a space of two inches for a survey of the room. What she saw caused her to take a swift backward step. It was not Walter—it was the revelation of how Walter had been living since that day in June when he had closed the door of his home and gone uncomplainingly away.

Walter's office was no larger than that of Mr. Ross, but it contained much more furniture. The desk, the swivel chair, the plain chair, the shelf, and the letter files were all there, but there was also a big, lumbering, homemade screen of unvarnished wood and unbleached muslin. Behind this was a couch—from which some one had arisen not long since, and which, it shocked Theresa to see, had not been opened for airing; though that was not wonderful, as there was nothing but a window giving upon a narrow court through which air could reach it.

Behind the bed was a curtain, and from the protuberances in its folds Theresa argued swiftly that Walter's wardrobe hung behind it—on hooks, she was willing to wager, and not on decent, shape-preserving "hangers" at all! Walter was so careless—and never seemed to believe her feminine wisdom about the value of an impeccably prosperous appearance.

She drew her lips together, widened the crack of the door, and took three long, silent steps to the curtain. Her worst suspicions were verified—there



She happened to be the only woman there.

they hung, Walter's clothes, all higgledy-piggledy. She sighed desperately and pityingly. If only she dared run out even now, and buy him some hangers, and put those clothes up with some slight regard to sartorial decency!

But there wasn't time-she didn't dare-and besides. Walter would have to take care of his own clothes now always-until he married again. She allowed herself a second of full, vindictive hatred of Walter's second wife. and then sanctimoniously told herself that she hoped the supposititious lady would have every domestic virtue, that she would take beautiful care of Walter and make him the most cheerful of homes-poor boy, orphaned too early to have been well trained in all the ways that women know! How he needed a woman's care! And would-couldthat second wife understand him as she, Theresa, did?

As she dropped the curtain, its corner caught against an obstruction, and she glanced downward. It was a wooden box full of clean underwear, clean linen, and clean socks—Walter's chiffonier, in short. The poor boy must be frightfully poor to be economizing in this fashion—turning half of a pen of an office into his lodging place.

What could have happened? And who was doing his washing now? That drab effect was none of faithful old Bridgie's work. She stooped, fingered the clothes disapprovingly, and drew back quickly as she jabbed her finger against a needle.

It was a darning needle thrust through a sock which had long since passed the stage at which a darning needle could be regarded as profitable to use upon it. Tessie lifted it, and looked at it with blended mirth and grief. Who but a dear, helpless ninny of a man like Walter would think of trying to make that collection of holes wearable again? Who but a poor, dear goose of a man like Walter would try to economize by doing his own darning?

She made swift examination of the dozen wrecks of footgear that lay in the box. It was evident that he had been his own mender for some time; his method had become simplified to a wonderful degree—the edges of the holes were brought together and tied in a bunch with a strong, double twist of darning cotton.

"He cannot walk in the things!" cried Tessie, who had to brush the tears from her eyes to see the full enormity of his system. "He can never walk in them! Oh, the poor, foolish, old dear!"



"Will you please tell Mr. Wainwright that I could not wait any longer?"

Would the second wife take good care of him—as good care as she, Tessie, had taken so grudgingly?

She stood hesitating a second, a bright color coming and going on her cheeks. Suddenly she reached her decision. She stooped and grabbed a pile of the socks, ran to Mr. Ross' room, preëmpted his morning paper, lying beside his desk, bundled the socks into it, and passed swiftly along the hall to the reception room.

"Will you please tell Mr. Wainwright that I could not wait any longer?" she said to the boy of the bulging brow. "I will call him up about another appointment."

She sped home to the flat, forgetting to notify the Brownleys that important personal business would prevent her coming to the office again that day. And she sat herself down to mend. Hour after hour she labored; one pair—two pairs—three pairs were made presentable. The others she put into her sewing basket. Then she wrote a note; it was short, but it took her until late in the afternoon to complete it. She summoned a messenger boy, and sent it.

Then she did various busy things in the kitchen. Cooking and agitation made her face rosy as the hour When the passed. doorbell clanged imperiously, how-ever, she went suddenly pale, and before her hand sought the button in the wall she pressed it against her side. Then she went slowly to the door, pale and tremulous.

How eager, how shabby, how hopeful, he looked, standing at

the door, as shaken as she, speechless with his hopes and fears!

"Oh, Walter!" she said, and began to cry against his waistcoat.

It was pity for him, it was the mother in her weeping over her child. How he needed her, how he needed her! And what was love but the outpouring response of one heart to the craving, the need, in another?

She drew him into the narrow hall. "Tessie—Tessie, do you mean it?" he asked brokenly, and kissed her bowed head as she sobbed: "With all my heart."

"Why have you been economizing so?" she asked him by and by.

"So as to have money to take you out to dinner when this day should come around!" he told her gladly. "And some for a servant for you, and a mending woman—"

SOCKS

"No, no!" protested Tessie hotly. "I shall do the mending myself. But how did you know this day was coming?"

"I didn't dare let myself believe anything else," he told her gravely. "But you-what did Wainwright say to you to bring this around? He said he was going to talk to you like a Dutch uncle, but I told him not to try to influence you at all. It had to be all your own heart, if it was to be at all, I told him. But he must have said something. What was it?"

"Nothing. It was my own heart— and your socks," she answered, laugh-ing and crying. "No, I'm not crazy.

By and by I'll tell you. Now come and help me set the table."

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"No—we're going out." He turned a well-filled pocket inside out, and bore down her objections to its immediate expenditure. He looked gay, laughing, commanding now-not the white-faced boy whose wistful mouth, and yearning eyes, and shabby clothes had stirred her maternal love half an hour before. But this glad, persuasive man stirred another chord in her heart. And as she went into her room to make ready for the celebration of his return, she patted her sewing basket affectionately and understandingly.



A White Twilight

LL day it hurried, flit and flit, Past the blurred windowpane, the snow, Till all in one vast sheet was knit, And still were myriad flakes to go.

And then I saw you, ruddy, gay, Breasting the wind with eager form As if it were our wedding day And this the glad confetti storm.

Ah, sweet in this warm window nook That shelters safe, but does not hide The wide world with its fiercest look! Sure, sweeter for the brawl outside!

Dear, to your love's good shield I press, But, like that gloaming wild and white, Looms up a world's unhappiness No joy of mine may shut from sight! JEANNIE PENDLETON EWING.



THE girl had big brown eyes, and hair that curled distractingly about small, pretty ears. Just now the eyes were a bit startled—before them was tumbling a shattered ideal of all properly brought-up, modest maidenhood.

"But, Mrs. Stanhope," the girl was remonstrating, "you don't mean, you can't mean, that you think the woman should—should propose to the man!"

The dainty little old lady in the opposite chair smiled tranquilly.

"Suppose we say 'suggest,' my dear," she murmured. "Propose is a bald word; I never liked it."

"But to suggest—even that would be -impossible" protested the girl

—impossible," protested the girl.

"I know," nodded the little old lady after a moment, with a curious, half-drawn breath. "Girls are apt to feel like that. But I've wondered sometimes, Barbara, if it wouldn't be better—if they didn't."

The brown eyes widened.

"Oh, but think! How could any girl—any nice girl—go to a man and say: 'I—I love you. Won't you please marry me?' Oh, I couldn't!—I mean, nobody could!"

A whimsical twinkle came into Mrs. Stanhope's eyes.

"Is that what you call 'suggesting'?" she asked.

Barbara Grant laughed. She flushed a pretty red.

"I suppose not," she admitted, "but that's what it means in the end; and and no nice girl could—do that!"

There was a long silence. The eyes of the little old lady had turned to the window through which could be seen the soft gleam of marble, and the precise beauty of clipped trees and hedges in the luminous June twilight. There could be seen, too, the black coats of two or three men. The girl's eyes followed the woman's, only their gaze singled out one especial coat, and lingered there. Then, suddenly, the woman gave a laugh, an unexpected little laugh that, in its bitterness, sounded almost like a sob.

"But you see I knew a girl once who was tempted to do just that," she declared a little breathlessly.

"But she didn't do it? She didn't yield to that temptation?"

"No."

Barbara Grant fell back triumphantly.

"There!" she cried. "You see!—She couldn't. I told you—no nice girl could!"

Again came that odd little laugh which sounded like a sob.

"So it seems," agreed a grimly ac-

quiescent voice.

There was another silence. The girl's eyes had once more sought that one particular black coat out of the window—a fact that was not lost on the little old lady. For a long minute Mrs. Stanhope watched in silence; then she spoke, a delicate pink in her cheeks.

"I believe I'll tell you—that story," she began hesitatingly; "the story of that girl—if you care to hear it."

"I'd love to," avowed the other dreamily, her eyes still out of the window. "I adore stories."

The little old lady moistened her lips. She had the appearance of one who is making a great effort at self-control.

"Well, to begin with, you must understand that she loved a man who was poor; at least, much poorer than her father," began Mrs. Stanhope lightly.

The girl came suddenly erect. Her eyes left the window; but if the little old lady noticed this she gave no sign. She went on still lightly, though with a steadfast avoidance of the startled brown eyes searching her face:

"The man loved her, too. The girl knew that. You know girls—can tell. Well, for a time there was just—happiness. They gave no promises, made no vows. They were just happy." The old voice trembled a little. "Like all young things, they didn't think; they just felt. They knew only that the sky was bluer and the air sweeter than before; and never so blue or so sweet as when they were together."

Barbara Grant nodded understandingly. Her gaze was again out of the window. The little old lady, watching

her, hurried on:

"For six months it was like this—then came a change. For a time the girl knew only that the world had turned black at the core; then she found out why she almost never saw the man's face, and why, when she did see it, it

was so stern and lined. It was because of her father's money. It was because for her the whole of life thus far had had a silk lining; and he, the man, had suddenly waked up to the fact that if she married him she couldn't have it any longer. He couldn't buy it for her.

"Not that he was really poor; he was not that. He had a good position and fair prospects. But, as his wife, her opera box would have to be an occasional orchestra stall, and her numerous Paris gowns would have to be just dresses, limited in number, and American made. Her yearly trips to Europe would turn into 'vacations' spent at shore or mountain resort, and her private car would become a chair in a Pullman. For this reason he had determined to see her no more."

"How did she find it out—that the man felt like this?" Barbara Grant's

voice shook.

The little old lady stirred restlessly in her chair. Her delicate hands, burdened with flashing jewels, fluttered as

if the rings were bonds.

"How? It-it doesn't matter just how she found out perhaps. But she found out. That is certain. And it didn't make her happy. You see, as it chanced, she didn't care a fig for that silk lining. In fact, I-I think she was actually tired of its rustle. She wanted to keep chickens, and grow flowers, and darn his socks, and broil his beefsteak for him. You see, she was domestic to her finger tips; but he couldn't know that, of course, when all her days were spent in automobiles and pink teas, and all her nights in ballrooms and opera houses. So he went away. It was then that she was tempted to tell him-to hint-to suggest-that she cared for him, and for what he could give her.'

"Oh, but Mrs. Stanhope, how could she—do that?" The brown eyes were shocked and startled again.

The little old lady sighed.

"She couldn't, apparently, my dear. At least, she didn't. She was frightened, and shocked, and dismayed—like you. She told herself that she couldn't do a thing like that; that she didn't love him, anyway; that it was unmaidenly



In the doorway she met a grave-eyed young man face to face.

to care for a man who had not declared in good and proper form his own affection for her. She even tried to convince herself that she didn't want the flower growing and the sock darning; that she preferred the silk lining which she had always had."

"Well, what did she do?" It was a breathless question, asked after a prolonged pause during which the little old lady had sat pensively silent.

"Do?" With an effort the narrator roused herself. "What did she do? Oh, she went on with the pink teas and the balls, of course, as a maidenly m a i d e n should; and by and by she m a r r i e d—a man who a s k e d her, y o u understand, a man to whom she did not have to hint."

"And she didn't—grow flowers?"

"Oh, yes, she grew them-like this." The little old lady disdainfully swept her hand toward the formal garden outside. "Stiff, stilted things, clipped like herself into prunes and prisms. She even darned socks-her own-when her fingers simply ached for something useful to do. You see, the

silk lining was richer than ever now, and, oh, how it rustled! The girl had made a great match. Her husband was many times a millionaire."

"But she wasn't-happy?"

It was a tremulous question put by the brown-eyed one whose gaze had turned this time almost fearfully toward that especial black coat, now barely discernible in the shadow garden.

For a long minute there was no answer; then very slowly the little lady began:

"I wouldn't want to say quite—that. She lived her life—like thousands of other girls, and she tried to do her duty. But as for happiness—there was never anything, of course, like those six wonderful months. And I'm afraid she did use to wonder, sometimes, what would have happened if she had yielded to that temptation, and found some way of—of letting him know how she felt. But, you see, like you, I was afraid."

Only the quickly repressed start showed that the girl had heard and understood the "I." She turned, her countenance luminous with feeling. "I don't care; I'm glad I told her," choked the little old lady under her breath. "He's John's son, and he shan't tread the path his father did. She cares for him, and would make him a splendid wife, and he ought to know it. But even now she may not have the courage to tell him. But if she would —if she only would!"

The girl did not sleep well that night. Properly brought-up, maidenly ideals do not shatter and tumble without raising the dust of centuries. Restlessly the



The warm rose-pink was stealing into the girl's face.

"Thank you," she murmured.

She would have said more had there not been a sudden stir in the room; the men were coming in after their smoke. The girl rose then. Lights were switched on, and pretty young women floated in from adjoining verandas. Under cover of the confusion the girl crossed the drawing room to the hall. In the doorway she met a grave-eyed young man face to face.

Even from where she sat, the little old lady saw the bright flush spring to the girl's cheek. She saw, too, the hungry look in the man's eyes as he gazed after her.

girl tossed from side to side in her bed. Wearily her mind trod the circle of her problem with no goal in sight.

"He cares, I know, and it's the money that's between us. He thinks I like all this, and want it—always. But how can I tell him? How? It isn't as if he didn't care. He does care, I know. It's the money that's between us. He thinks I like—"

And so on and on round the circle limped her thoughts, a dismal merry-go-round of fruitless travel. But even a merry-go-round cannot run forever; and in time, from sheer weariness, the girl fell asleep.

It was little better in the morning. The girl woke late and unrefreshed. The silence of her room appalled her, and sent her in all haste to the chatter and laughter downstairs. These in turn sent her to the quiet of the garden outside.

It was in the garden that she found Pollykins, the small granddaughter of the house. Pollykins was really Dorothy Marguerite, but no one ever called her that, except when she was naughty, and that was very seldom.

Pollykins was not naughty to-day, yet

she was pouting gloomily.

"Well, Pollykins, what's wrong with

you?"

It was a bit listlessly that the girl put the question, if the truth must be told; the woes of ten look so small to the world-weary eyes of twenty-one. But the listlessness fled at the first words of the answer.

"Doctor John. That's what's wrong

with me."

"Doctor John! Why, Pollykins!"
The brown eyes looked shocked and a little displeased.

"Well, he is."

"What do you mean? What has he

done!

"He hasn't done anything. He won't do anything, and that's what's the trouble." And Pollykins drew a dismal sigh.

Oddly enough, the sigh was echoed

from an older throat.

"And what is it you want Doctor John to do—that he won't?" asked the girl.

Pollykins, being but ten, quite lost the significance of the emphasis on the

pronoun.

"Everything. Play with me, tell me stories, swing me way up in the swing." "And he won't do any of these

things?"

The child shook her head.

"No. Oh, yes, he does them, some; but not as if he liked it—now. If he swings me, he only pushes me all limp and oozly; and, if he tells me stories, he forgets right in the middle of the most excitingest part, and begins to sit and think, all humped up like that. See

him now way through the trees there. As if anybody *could* tell stories, and look like that!"

"As if anybody could!" murmured the girl; and the brown eyes, watching the despondent figure of the man, grew

suddenly very tender.

"And when I nudges him, and wakes him up, and asks what they did next," continued Pollykins aggrievedly, "he jumps and says: 'Eh? Oh, to be sure! Where was I? What did happen next?' As if I could tell that! It's him that's telling the story—only he just doesn't tell it."

"You're right, Pollykins; he just doesn't tell it," whispered the browneyed one, her cheeks deepening their

tint.

"And he 'spects me to tell it," pouted Pollykins. "As if I could! As if little girls ever told stories to big men! And I told him so, and then he said it."

"Said what?"

"That 'twould be better if they did sometimes, so a fellow could find out where he stood. And say, what did he mean by that?"

"Pollykins, did he say that?" Just that?" demanded the brown-eyed one breathlessly. Her cheeks were very red

now

"Course he did. Isn't I telling you? And say, Miss Barbara, what did he

mean?"

The brown-eyed one did not seem to hear. She looked to the right, to the left, and behind her; then, as if throwing off some restraining hand, she gave her shoulders a little shake.

"Pollykins, we will tell him the story! Run—quick—before I—I come to my senses. Tell him you want him; that I'm going to tell you a story, and that we thought maybe he'd like to hear it. Er—Pollykins, I—I guess you needn't, either," finished the girl hurriedly.

But it was too late. Pollykins was already halfway down the garden path.

The girl was very white when Pollykins came back with Doctor John. The man looked at her questioningly, perplexedly, a little fearfully. He had seen that same expression in the eyes of some frail woman who had nerved her-

self to come under the knife. He could understand it then, but not now. Unconsciously he adopted the soothing cheeriness that he always used to combat that look.

"So it's a story, is it, that we're to hear?"

"Yes," gurgled Pollykins

rapturously.
"Y-yes," said the girl;
but she did not speak rap-

turously, and she turned very ostentatiously toward Pollykins as she began the

story.

It was a halting, rambling thing at the start—that story. What it was a bout the man scarcely heeded at all. He was much too engrossed in watching the way the warm rose-pink was stealing into the girl's face. Suddenly, however, he became alert.

"You see," the girl was saying, looking fixedly at Pollykins, "he was a very brave knight, indeed; yet his weapons weren't the kind that killed people; they were the kind that made them well instead. His hand was very steady and true, and his eye was clear, and keen, and kind; and for all this the lady loved him."

"Of course," breathed Pollykins in rapt approval. "And of course the

knight liked that."

"Oh, but he didn't know it—that she cared," stammered the girl a little hastily. "You see, there were other knights all around her—Knights of Pleasure—who had beautiful horses and chariots, and who spent all their time riding and driving about, gathering delightful things to bring to her to please her, or else in whirling her away with them to eat rich foods, or to take part in some gorgeous carnival."

"Then, why didn't she like them instead?" demanded Pollykins, roundeyed and skeptical. "I'm sure I should



"Barbara! You don't mean—darling!" he breathed as he came

have thought she would when they were so good to her."

"Yes, yes, I know; and—and others thought so, too," hurried on the girl. "And that's what was the trouble. You see, she, the lady, was a lady of pleasure, too. All her life she had sung, and danced, and laughed; and of course everybody thought that that was what she wanted to do all the rest of her life."

"Barbara," interposed an unsteady masculine voice; but the girl did not seem to hear. She plunged on feverishly, her eyes still fixed on Pollykins' absorbed little face:

"Yes, that's what everybody thought;

even the brave knight who went about making sick people well-he thought so, too. You see, he didn't have lands, and castles, and chariots like those other knights, and he didn't think anything he could give his wife would be quite fine enough for this lady of pleasure who did nothing but sing, and dance, and laugh all day. But-but that's just where he made his mistake. If he had but known it, she was tired of laughing, and singing, and dancing, and she didn't care a whit for all the fine things those other knights dangled before her eyes. She wanted just to go away quietly with him, and comfort and rest him when he came in from his long day of making sick people well."

"Barbara, Barbara, what do you mean? Barbara, you must answer me!"

The masculine voice was more insistent now, but it was not one bit more steady.

Still the girl did not turn. Still she gazed persistently at Pollykins.

"And so the lady, one day, tried to to tell him—to tell this knight; but but she hadn't more than commenced before she wished she hadn't. And and that's all of the story," finished the girl impotently, springing suddenly to her feet, and fleeing in a panic of confusion down the garden path.

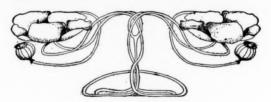
Behind her, unseen, stalked the ghost of a shattered ideal, jeering a taunting "I told you so!" in her ears. Behind her, also—but very visible—hurried a man, aglow with a joy that was yet

plainly almost disbelieving.

"Barbara, you don't mean—darling!" he breathed, as he came abreast.

Still farther behind, a small maid sat amazed, disconsolate.

"Well, if that's the kind of stories girls tell, I'd rather have Doctor John's," she declared. An opinion the girl herself might not have been slow to echo, for she, just around the bend of the path, was hearing—Doctor John's.



The Shadow

A BOVE the river's silver tides
The still, green mountain rose,
Untroubled by the hand of man,
A peak of calm repose.
The breath of balsam from it blew,
And moss its boulders veiled,
And slowly o'er its wooded crest
A cloud its shadow trailed.

But nay! 'Twas not a summer cloud That cast its shadow there, The very air was sweet with peace, And trembled with a prayer; And so I knew that overhead An angel passing by Let fall upon the mountaintop Her shadow from the sky.

MINNA IRVING.



The Holiday

By Grace Margaret Gallaher

Author of "The Understanding Heart," "The Farmer," "The Singing Hand," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY H. M. BUNKER

OOK out th' chimbley don't get afire, an' skim th' cream off'n th' milk 'fore you give it to the cats, an' stew over th' preserves; they're a-workin', an'——"

"There, Aunt Phrony, I'll be good's I know how," her niece, Calista Lay, broke in. "You stay more'n one night to Aunt Ann Jane's if you feel to, me an' th' cats will be all standin', 'long o' th' house, when you get back."

Mrs. Sophronia Tyler, a small, anxious figure, much encumbered by wrappings against a windy drive, fumbled with her green berege veil that had blown into her mouth. Her niece, in the opportunity thus offered, whispered to the young man by the wagon wheel: "For th' land's sake, Sam, drive

'long, or she'll call to mind somethin' more she's ordained to do.

"Give my best wishes to all th' folks," she raised her voice clearly again, "an' tell Aunt Ann Jane 'tain't proper conduct in her to have one o' her spells right long in King's own weather.

Sam clucked to his horses, and Aunt Sophronia, still imbroglioed with the veil, was borne away, her further be-

hests hanging in mid-air.

Calista stood where they had left her in the road, the September sun beating warm upon her head, the lively wind snatching at her skirts. She was a slender creature, straight as a wand, with

thick bright hair and a very ecstasy of life quivering from her. She watched the flutter of Aunt Phrony's veil and the peak of Sam's cap till they sank below the hill, then whirled, swift-motioned, as if winged at the heels, toward her own kitchen door.

"My soul an' body!" She broke the circle with a sharp angle. "If there ain't Jesse an' Emm'line drivin' over from th' Johnny Cake Road. Th' Lord send they ain't p'inted to spend th' day with me!"

She twitched her apron into place, passed an admonishing hand over the little curls shaken loose by the wind, and awaited soberly the newcomers.

But that no fell plot against her peace was harbored by her sister and brotherin-law was manifest in the latter's

greeting:

"We're goin' to th' Westbrook Fair, Calista, an' we just drove by to see how you're makin' out, an' to leave this basket o' our prime Baldwins.'

Calista took the gift with gay thanks that were not all for the apples.

"I dunno but 'twill make talk, my goin' to th' fair an' gran'ther buried only two weeks ago," said Emm'line in a softly prim voice. Emm'line was the pattern of all miniature prettiness and ladylike appearance. "But Jesse's 'xib-itin' his two yoke o' steers, an' I'm a bride, an' 'tain't as if I'd put on black

for him. I shouldn't like, though, for any one to make a handle out o' it that I didn't show proper respect for my own relations."

"I don't see how they're a-goin' to, anyways they take it," responded Calista, with a heartiness springing rather from a desire to avoid argument than from conviction.

"Where's Aunt Phrony?" Emmeline's blue eyes, wide and round like a baby's,

peered up into the house.

"Oh, she's down th' road apiece." Her sister was jauntily casual.

Emm'line's next query was more disastrous.

"I don't see your washin' on th' line: you took it in a'ready?"

"It ain't out yet; I was detained," returned the victim speciously, but her

cheeks burned a guilty red.

"I done mine on Saturday, quick as ever I found out we was goin' to th' fair Monday, an' I ironed, too, an' done my Sat'day bakin' an' cleanin'!" Emm'line's face was portentous with reproachful superiority.
"Good land!" Calista's voice had the

fervor of a prayer for patience with

such untoward perfection.

"I got an a'mighty cap'ble little wife, eh, sister?" The young farmer's face glowed with good, honest pride in his pretty Emmy.

"I rather guess you have, Jess; there ain't another such girl for faculty in th' county," Calista gave back, with

eager generosity.

Emm'line was not to be caught by the lure of praise. "I try to do my duty always. It ain't in 'cordance with right principles to wait round on any fancies an' whimsies," she said through lips set into a narrow slit, and with her chinablue eyes fixed immovably upon her sister.

Calista braved the disapproval gallantly for a long breath, only to droop her own eyes as she had drooped them a thousand times before in flustered

surrender.

The man, uneasily aware of home significancies in these generalities, cast an apprehensive glance at his cap'ble wife sitting properly regardful of her

starched blue muslin, and took the conversation into his own hands:

"Father's gettin' your gran'ther's estate in good shape for you, so's he can give you girls each your share real prompt. He says th' ol' gentleman left considible more than what folks thought for."

"I do wonder at gran'ther leavin' th' whole farm an' your portion out an' out to you, Calista, when you ain't got a husband to manage for you, an' don' have any more business faculty'n a mouse, you might say. He ought to put a conservator over you." Emm'line contributed this through the slit.

Calista laughed, because that was the way emotion took her, and flung back merrily: "I'd feel terr'bly kind o' sorry for that conservator! Jess, you'll look out I don't throw it down th' well,

won't you?"

Jesse again filled the breach with his

good-natured effort.

"I 'low you an' me'd better jog 'long, Emmy, if we're to 'rive in season."

He nodded kindly to his gay sisterin-law, who seemed some way or other to rile Em up whenever they met, and she called after him:

"Hope you bring back first prize for your cattle, Jess." The immaculate Emm'line inclined her head in cold silence.

Calista scudded into the house. She had, as her sister often remarked, "no ca'm"; she was all flash, and fire, and

color, like a humming bird.

The Lay house had been at one time the ancient tavern on the now deserted post road, where it loomed a great red landmark on the hilltop. Calista hated its vast, empty rooms echoing to the revels of mice, and its furnished ones whose interminable floors she had scrubbed on aching knees through wonderful summer mornings. She sat down with a snap in the middle of the kitchen floor, and looked about her.

"I'm all stark, starin' lone, Vashti," she rejoiced aloud to the yellow cat with the jewel eyes. "An' I guess it's th' first time it ever happened in my

life."

She drew a great breath as if she made the serenity of it part of herself; then she spun out of her chair and into the well house.

"Here, pusskins." She set down a bowl rich with cream. "You an' your babies can have top pourin'!"

Another turn sent her into the pantry

after jars of fruit.

"The biddies'll get these," darting to the back door. "Aunt Phrony can think I et the whole six for dinner if she's

a mind to.'

Her mischief-seeking eyes lighted upon a decorous row of dish towels drying behind the stove; them she snatched down and strewed about the floor. Next she lifted the sober clock from the shelf where it had ticked away the minutes for a hundred years, and plumped it down on the table. "You need a change," she admonished it.

"There, I feel some better. But I ain't a-goin' to waste my holiday in-doors. I'm a-goin 'to give me a jaunt."

While she talked to the unregarding cats and kittens, she stored into a tin pail slices of bread and butter, a square of cheese, and a huge section of fruit cake.

"Em said her weddin' cake, if 'twas used prudent, would do for comp'ny a year. Comp'ny! Not one o' 'em lots on it like I do, an' I never had 'nough yet in my life." She swept a scornful glance over her faded brown calico. "I ain't a-goin' pleasurin' in this rag!" And at the word she flew up the steep stairs.

When she came back she was in a clean pink cambric that brought out the color in her smooth cheeks and the

glow in her eyes.

"Now, you behave prudent." She named the kittens in mimicry of her aunt's precise accents. "An' get th' washin' all out by ten o'clock, an' skim the milk, an' don't chase your tails nor bat at th' flies."

She gave each furry ball a squeeze before shutting the kitchen door upon them. In deference to convention, she locked the door and hid the key under the mat. Then, bareheaded, she stepped out into the free world. The tang of the autumn air stung in her blood, as she laughed aloud and broke into a quick pace.

"My, ain't th' land wonderful to

behold!

She stood, the thrall of beauty, agaze at the panorama of the ranges of hills, the narrow valleys aflame in russet, crimson, and gold, and the highway of the river winding in and out.

Where should she go? Fishing in Powder River, berrying in the back lots, or beyond the Bound Brook Road for sweet fern? This last, the longest

emprise, won.

When she had mounted the last ridge behind the ancient house she stopped to catch her breath, and view

it from this lofty aspect.

"When did I have my last holiday?" as if this were the thought the timeworn tavern held for her. "I dunno as I ever had a whole one all to myself since I come into th' world. Why, if you'll believe it, that's th' truth. There was Grandma Bates thought I was made to fetch an' carry all her little needments, an' then poor mother, she felt obligated to teach me cookin' o' mornin's an' fine sewin' afternoons, an' when she was gone Em was a-comin' on to overlook my errin' steps—an' there was always gran'ther! An' now, when gran'ther's gone an' Em's wedded, lo and behold you, Aunt Phrony, whimmy as an' ol' cat, sets up her tent to my door, so's I shan't fall into mischief! My soul!"

Pathetic voices out of her hungry childhood called to her; the light died out of her face; lines of hard living grooved in around her mouth. As if a pool of water, agleam with sun-smitten waves, should quiet and let the gazer see down below in the depths

hidden rocks.

Her eyes rested on a fold in the hills sheltered by a great cliff from the weather's unkindness, a lonely "God's acre" that had held her family dead, "those meek members of the resurrection," a hundred years. She mused upon the ancient graves, on one espe-



"What's happened to him?" she asked casually.

cially, a new-turned mound, and now her warm mood was as cold as clay.

"Gran'ther kep' every one o' th' ten commandments, his word was his bond, an' he never missed a meetin' when th' bells rung, but his heart was as hard an' narrow as a stone." She looked up into the sky where the shining white clouds were piled together in the similitude of a city, towered and battlemented, "I guess up there he's learnin' a new commandment—that ye love one another."

She broke the web of her sorrowful

dreams decisively.

"It's all past an' gone, an' I ain't a-goin' to let it spoil my holiday!" And

she again set forth.

Across the pastures she gypsied, by the tangled path to the new lower road, singing half-forgotten tunes, staining her lips with blackberries, plucking flowers by their heads, like a wanton child, throwing sticks at the scolding chipmunks, running races with a fat, brown bunny skittering for his hole. "Inebriate of air and debauchee of dew," the spirit of her holiday was fast turning her back to childhood.

The sun was swinging toward noon when she reached the road, and drew aside to let a smart red wagon pass. Two young men, mean-faced and crafty-eyed, were in it, and a stupidly pretty young woman.

"Mornin', Calista. Ride?" called out

the man driving.

"Thank you, Cephas," she answered civilly, "I ain't bound your way." Then to the woman: "Goin' to th' fair, Laura?"

"Just for half a day; we got to get back 'fore dark," answered the woman in a voice as dull as her face.

The driver whipped up, and they were gone, leaving Calista with eyes bent upon the dusty road.

bent upon the dusty road.
"Lost somethin', Calista?" wheezed a broken voice behind her.

"Great Hector! Cap'n Spencer, you scared th' breath o' life out o' me." She spun around on an old man, laughing.

"How's rheumatiz these days?"
"Poorly, thank God!" The old man's smile cracked his leathery skin into great seams. "You headed for th'

fair?"

"No, I ain't a-goin'. Let's set us down on this stone, an' have a dish o' conversation. I ain't heard a word o' Pettipaug doin's since Sister Emm'line was wedded."

"Well, I dunno as I got much trade for you." The ancient mariner shook his head at the invitation to sit as bad for the joints. "Kind o' slack season for gossip, as I view it. Latest I heard was that Dave Maltby ain't no better o' his hurt, an' ain't likely to be, neither."

The listener's smile of expectation set

"What's happened to him?" she asked casually, while her hands under her

dress shut together hard.

"He give him a reg'lar smash up to his hand cuttin' timber 'long two weeks back, guess it 'twas, an' kind o' shook him up, inside, too, so he ain't done a lick o' work since.'

"Why, I just passed Cephas, an' Abner, an' Cephas' wife, bound for th' fair."

"Like 'nough. Th' neighbors say it's much as ever they carry him down bread an' baked food."

"Carry him down! Where is he?" Calista's breath fluttered in her throat so the words had scarce strength to leave it.

"Israel in Egypt! Calista Lay, I should think you was ol' Rip Van Winkle they tell 'bout! Where you been you ain't heard Ceph an' Ab's moved off to th' farm their own mother—she that was a Bill-left 'em, an' Dave's in th' ol' place he heired from his own motherlet's see, she was a Tucker-no, she warn't, she was Joel Griswold's daughter from th' Bokum Road."

"We was havin' a weddin' to our house," his listener excused herself. "an' I guess th' whole o' Pettipaug might 'a' burned down an' we none th'

wiser."

"Don't you an' Laura exchange visits?" The old man peered at her like

"No, she's a good few years younger than me, an' gran'ther didn't feel friendly to ol' man Maltby 'cause o' th' fuss to th' meetin' house, an' th' fam'ly don't go to our meetin' now," Calista stammered out her explanations.

Words wafted from the past beat through the captain's mind. He told his wife later: "It come over me on th' run, you might say, that Calista Lay

an' Dave Maltby kep' comp'ny a consid'ble spell back, an' then they broke it all off in a good deal o' a tew, so I made my efforts to back out o' th' topic."

'I dunno as Dave's so bad off as they make out.. I dunno how he is handled by his injury. I got to mog 'long to my

dinner."

Calista sat on the warm stone, blown upon by the merry wind, her truant mood lost in dreams. So the wicked stepmother had children as wicked as herself who would desert David in his need. Well, do men gather grapes of thistles? And David himself? How long since she had talked to him? She counted back over the years as if she did not know the time to the hour when he had told her—out in the darkness under the pines so that she could not see his face, only hear his queer, strained voice-that he thought he ought to set her free, and she in a numbness of bewildered misery had let

Fifteen years that summer; she had been just eighteen, and David had given her a ring with a blue stone for her birthday, and she had been happy as the bird that now on some bush thrilled its heart out in rapture. That was the last of their vows plighted in such sweet solemnity. She could not go to him to understand better, and he

had never come to her.

She had not grieved for him in any languor or repining, Grandma and Gran'ther Bates had seen to it that she had no time to mope, but like a mother who steps brisk and capable about all her duties, yet keeps always quick in her heart the memory of her dead child, she lived daily in "the ashes of a great

remembrance.

How long the lonely years! And yet, as she looked back over them now like a watch in the night, the thought of plays and tasks companioned by the boy, David, flowed over her, fresh as if they were a part of yesterday. She raised her eyes, and knew herself standing at the fork of the road that led to his farm. Her whole body quivered to an imperious touch; sup-

pose she take a holiday from custom and "conduct," too, and go, that instant, to see David. She was only an old, half-forgotten childhood mate now; that other relation was buried deep under fifteen heavy years. She turned up

the fork impetuously.

It was fifteen years since her feet last trod the path, yet she could have conned it at midnight. Here at the bend was the little old house, lapsing into ruin, where she was born and had lived till her mother died and she went to her grandparents. She could not even look at it, its face was so poignant with the past. Here was the outlaw apple tree whose ungrafted fruit she and Dave stole on the road to school; here the white-faced rock under which they used to hide to leap out terrifyingly at small sisters and brothers; here the deceitful brook that skimmed along so shallowly, and from whose deep pool Dave had rescued her half drowned. Every tree and bush, every tang of roadside weed was filled with the sweetness of the Long Ago.

And now she was in the Maltby farm itself, pitied of Pettipaug for its stony acres, but prized by the boy Dave and the happy little girl, because the river lapped the very doorsills, and its soft voice murmured through every room. To-day it lay in the warm sunlight as if enchanted in weed-grown silence.

Calista hesitated, timid for an instant; had neighborhood gossip erred, and was David really over at his brothers' home? An old dog, growling feebly, crept around the house to warn her off. Calista had known him a

tumbling puppy.
"Skipper!" She called his name, for it was she who had christened him, and

followed him to the river.

Under the elm by the well, a man lay back in an armchair, another old dog stretched at his feet. His eyes, blue-hollowed, were closed, and his face, under a coat of tan, had a dreadful lividness. Calista believed him dead, and all the blood in her body beat in her throat. Then she saw his chest rise with his breath. She thrilled, as always, at his great frame, the nobility

of his head with its heavy hair, and the beautiful clear line of his cheek and iaw. Then she sat down on the doorstep to wait.

The man stirred with a weak sigh, and opened his eyes. At once the old

dogs crept close up to him.

"You had a nice nap?" the girl asked, with a tranquil smile, as if she were a nurse set to watch.

The man accepted her presence with-

out comment.

"I was dreamin' of you," he said

simply.

"Was it a pretty dream?" She crinkled her face merrily at him. "How's your hand actin' now?"

He drew his bandaged left hand out from the quilt spread over his knee.

"Not so terr'ble good," he confessed. "Looks to me as if 'twas bandaged pretty queer. I'll take my word you tewed it up yourself. You let me give a look to it."

She walked over to him easily, for it was all a part of her holiday escaped from a fairy world of unrealities that he showed no surprise, but smiled up at her from his sick face. She looked again into his beautiful dark eyes, marveling a little always at the visions they beheld-poets' eyes-and her own brilliant ones burned with tears. So she laughed, after her way, unwinding his wrappings.

She set her lips when the hand lay bare to her, lest she cry out, then said

cheerfully:

"If that ain't fit to frighten th' French. You got some kind o' lotion to wash it out?"

"It ain't broke any bones, doctor says, just kind o' smashed th' flesh. There's stuff in a bottle an' more bandages he left on th' kitchen shelf.'

Calista sped into the house, half expectant of his stepmother's harsh voice

screaming:

"Wipe off your feet! Don't slam my

door!'

She knelt beside him, and dressed his injury with fingers delicately skillful through love. Her motions were quiet as a bird's, but within her heart plunged against the walls of her breast.

"How do you come to do it?" wind-

ing on the new bandages.

"Well, it's a kind o' long story; th' upshot o' it is, th' dogs are always a-hanging round my heels; I guess you recollect how 'twas with me when I was a boy?"

Calista nodded as there swam in the tears that brimmed her eyes a picture of a big, kind boy who could lure even the

little wild creatures to him.

"I was cuttin' timber back on th' mountain, an' my tree didn't fall as I'd planned for it. Pete here's old an' deaf, an' slow——" He hesitated, smiling in a queer bashfulness she remembered from his boyhood. "He's th' last dog poor Enoch ever owned; he had him on his bed when he died. I guess I thought 'twas my own brother there, when I jumped for him."

"He warn't hurt, was he?"

Calista bent to stroke the dog's shaggy head, all the tenderness she could never show to his master trembling in her touch.

"Not a scratch," happily, as if that were, after all, the point of impor-

tance.

Calista worked away at his hand in

"That feels real good," the man murmured in a thin voice.

"You eat any breakfast?" she asked, softly compelling.

"Not this mornin', I guess. I don't care 'nough 'bout it to cook it."

"Forever! You rest you a piece"—she was up on her feet now—"while I bresh up a fire for dinner."

Calista scoured the cupboard for

provisions.

"I'd like to have that Ceph an' Ab under a mortar an' pestle." She shook a fist at the empty shelves. "Pork an' stale bread for a sick man! An' that Laura to leave Dave to cook his own things! No more cap'ble of it than an infant child."

She looked out of the window in search of inspiration, and found it in

the pasture.

"That cow'll give some milk. I don't care who 'tis owns her, Ceph, I hope.

An' there's hens, too; likely I can rout

out an egg."

With a fury of concentration that made her cheeks like wild roses, and all the little sprays of hair curl damply on her forehead, she prepared a meal.

"You just better eat now, I tell you," she commanded David, with mimic fierceness to hide the passion of pity

moved within her.

"This coffee'd rouse up a dead man, Cassy," David said as he drank.

The girl went white for an instant at the child name. She ate her own lunch on the step opposite him, watching eagerly the color creep into the sick man's wan face, his eyes fill with light. She felt there a sickness deeper than that of the body, and lines of spiritual pain more searing than any racking of nerve or sinew.

"You got th' Lively Peggy still?"

She pointed to the slender sloop at anchor by the river wall; this was a

safe subject.

"Same old girl!" His voice began to sound like the David she once knew. "You mind the time me an' you played hooky from school an' sailed down to Poverty Island in her?"

Their laughter mingled in different keys.

"And th' time we was most drawn over th' mill dam?"

They had launched the ship of memory, and went sailing away to the Enchanted Isles. The sun pulled itself over the peak of the day and began to slide downhill while they laughed, and talked, and interrupted each other with stories of their childhood. Not a word did either speak of the estranging sea that for fifteen years had washed between them. Their lives might have stopped when he wore short "pants" and she short frocks.

"Wasn't those great ol' times, an' weren't we th' limbs?" laughed Calista, drying her eyes after a tale of David's. She had entered into the hour with full-hearted zest. Was not this a holiday from yesterday and to-morrow? "Now I'm a-goin' to bandage your hand 'gain; that wash must have all

dried out."

A change was over David when she came back; his figure lay slack against

the chair, his eyes were dull.

"You feel bad, Davy?" The little name of his childhood slipped out unaware.

For answer, David gave a long,

groaning sigh.

"I dunno as I'll ever be a man 'gain, Cassy, an' I dunno as I want to be. I guess I'll be glad to get through with it all right now." His gentle face was heaving with suffering.

Calista laughed sweetly because she was moved beyond any words she could use. She longed to gather his head against her breast, and comfort him as if he had been her baby.

"Lordy, Dave," she cheered him, "your hand's took a turn for th' better since I come, an' that warm food you put into you is a-doin' you good right long."

David fixed her with his somber

gaze.

"They've took my home away from

"They've took my home away from me."

"They? Who? What you mean?"
Calista stopped her bandaging in her bewilderment.

"I was born here, Cassy, an' my father was afore me, and my grandfather afore him, right in th' very room where I first saw the light, an' I've looked out on that river every mornin', winter and summer, for thirty-five year." He swept his well hand in a slow gesture, as if of renunciation, toward the blue trail of the Connecticut. "An' they've taken it away from me." His voice was monotonously dreary.

Calista wrapped herself in her arms, swaying back and forth on tremulous

knees.

"You tell me how 'twas," she pleaded, as if to a child.

David roused himself at her tone.

"I ain't a-goin' to whine or cry off," he said more stoutly. "I brought it on myself by my actions, an' I'd do it all over 'gain same way. There, let's talk some more 'bout them pretty times when we was little rips teamin' round this region."

"David Maltby, you tell me what's

happened this minute!"

Calista spoke with all the vehemence of possession of the old days when she and Dave had no secrets from each other.

"Well." He hesitated, then plunged in with a flow of words odd to his moderate speech; he had conned his tale many times to himself. "You know father was involved in debts pretty deep when he died?"

Calista nodded; that had been since they separated, but all Pettipaug was aware how kind, easy-going Jerry Maltby had given away all he ever

made.

"He was my father, Cassy. Would you have let his debts go unpaid, just because 'twasn't you yourself that had made them, if you was his only son?"

"I'd work my fingers to the bone first," cried Calista passionately.

David looked down at his maimed

hand.

"I have," he said in a low voice, "an' I've paid every debt, dollar for dollar. No man can say Jared Maltby owes him aught."

"Oh, Davy, how splendid!" Tears

gleamed on her eyelashes.

"It left me high an' dry," he went on, "but I'm strong as two men, an' I can live on next to nothin'. The winter I paid the last debt I got sick; I was in the river consid'ble long one cold day."

"I know, you pulled Nancy Lord's boy out from under th' ice, an' it broke with you," eagerly. How she had ex-

ulted in that rescue!

"Well—yes, I guess that's it. I was laid up a good few weeks, I had doctors' bills an' a nurse—Laura warn't able to do for me—an' I weren't earnin' my board." He hesitated, hunting for careful words. "I borrowed o' my brothers, o' Cephas an' Abner."

"Half-brothers!" amended Calista,

with a snap.

David smiled gently; her tartness

never stung him.

"I give em a mortgage on th' farm for all it was worth, for I wanted to get a good start 'gain. Well, my barn burned, an' my best horse was killed,



Calista believed him dead.

an' my sheep got th' rot. I never caught up, that's all. I couldn't pay my interest, Cassy, don't you see? An' now I'll never be able to, a cripple like I am."

"I don't see, Dave. You can't pay th' interest, but what's that to do with you goin' away?"

She fixed her eager, bewildered eyes on him; truly Emm'line was right, she knew no more of business than a

He reached out as if he would touch her bright hair, then drew back sharply.

"Cephas and Abner have foreclosed th' mortgage. That means they've taken my farm 'way from me. It don't belong to me any more 'cause I ain't kep' up my interest money. They've got th' law behind 'em."

"I call it a wicked, cruel law that'll let men like that Cephas an' Abner take his own farm away from their own brother," she cried fiercely.

"Half-brother," slyly.

"What they goin' to do with it?" "Sell it to Lot Pratt, I believe." "Where you goin'?"

"I dunno. The poor farm

likely.'

The two faced each other in silence, of despondency on one side, and of rage on the other. The man spoke first.

"Th' boys are a-goin' to let me stay till my hand's so as I can get work by th' day. I shan't starve.'

"What's Lot Pratt want of your farm?" she asked irrelevantly.

"For my timber piece. He's got a sawmill up th' river a piece, an' he wants all th' timber he can lay a-goin' to build down to Say-brook."

"Why can't you sell th' bridge

folks timber?"

"I could, an' make a big thing of it, too, if I could 'a' kep' th' farm.

"You want to learn my views o' those half-brothers o' yours? They're a mean, cruel, selfish set, th' both o' 'em, an' I hope their

horses run away to th' fair an' break

their necks!"

The words were a child's, but the tone was filled with the passion of outraged love, like a mother's toward the abuser of her child.

David did not rise to her fury. His eves seemed more sunken in his head; his face, so kind and calm always, was furrowed with anguish; drops from the soul's labor stood out on his

forehead.

"This is my home, Cassy." voice was thick with the feeling he did not try to hide. "I've growed into this farm like it was my shell. I know every tree an' bush on it, an' I prize 'em all. There ain't a corner o' it I couldn't go to blindfold. 'Tain't because it's a rich an' sightly heritage; you know it ain't; it's a poor, stunted, backwood parcel o' ground, an' always will be, but it's mine, Cassy; it's mine!

mother's grave out beyond there, an' father's, an' Enoch's. This whole place's full o' memories o' joys and sorrows I've lived through. Why, this farm is part o' me. If you tear me 'way from it, I'll bleed to death, like I would if you cut off that hand.'

Calista caught the wounded hand in

"They can't mean to do that cruel thing! They haven't sold it to Lot." "Not yet, but they're a-goin' to."

"Oh, Dave, have you talked to 'em bout it, how you feel toward your

home?"

David straightened his great figure till she felt the awe his vast strength always moved in her. How big, and strong, and tender, and good he was! Was there any one base enough to hurt this gentle giant?

"I begged 'em, I demeaned myself-

for my home's sake."

"An' they said?" "They'd give me a month. Then I

hurt my hand."

Calista's small face flared crimson, her eyes gleamed lightnings, but no maledictions rushed from her. Instead she stood up, a slender, staunch figure. This was one day in all the dull thousands that had been, outstanding in all the gray thousands to come. She was not herself to-day, sober-stepping, dutifully-working Calista Virginia Lay, but a creature loosed from all bonds, free to follow every strange voice that called in her blood.

"Davy," she said very softly, "I got to go off on an errand for a little while, but I'm a-comin' back to do your hand an' get your supper 'fore it's dark. You got a horse I can hitch up?"

"Only th' colt. He's a clipper to go, but he ain't all broke yet."

"Will you sit real quiet an' patient till I come back? You promise?"

David's sad eyes in his worn face

turned to her pitifully.

"Where you goin'?" he asked like a child about to be deserted by its mother.

Calista rocked her arms back and forth. Oh, to take him to her heart! And to-morrow the holiday would be ended, and she gone from him forever.

"I'm a-goin' to do somethin' for you that'll help 'bout th' farm. Don't you ask questions."

Her hand on his shoulder pushed him

back tenderly.

Spent with trouble, David sank languidly back into his chair. He looked

asleep when she left him.

The colt demeaned himself as if in league with Cephas and Abner, prancing about the pasture, scorning the lure of oats, refusing the bit. But Calista's vehemence of will overcame his lesser spirit, and once harnessed he went at a flying gait down the road.

The farm heired by the half-brothers, prosperous and neat though it was, bore a bleak, unhomelike aspect, for houses take on the nature of those who dwell in them. The Maltby men were just unharnessing; they stared agape as the colt ramped into their barnyard.

"Great King Agrippy! You got Dave's sorrel?" was all Abner, the

more nimble-witted, found to say.
"You hitch him to somethin'," answered Calista, as if it were the most natural thing in life that she, bareheaded, in a pink cambric gown, should be driving David Maltby's wild colt about the world.

She smiled winningly upon both the brothers, for she knew there had been plenty of Pettipaug lads who wished to keep company with her if she had been willing, and Abner was a single man, but she could not know how hurry, and pity, and love had turned a sweet-faced, spirited woman into a beautiful girl.

"I desire a little talk with you both, if 'tis so as you can spare th' time for it." She had learned her introduction by rote, it ran "trippingly off the tongue.

"Come in an' set in th' foreroom." Abner was as hearty as one of his.

breed could be. He led the way, Calista stepping brightly behind him, Cephas following, still in his daze.

The three sat stiffly on the haircloth seats, the foreroom dark and smelling of the cookies shut up in its cupboard.

Calista's heart worked as if it would pull loose from its moorings, but her courage held steady. This was not she herself, but her changeling that faced

the two men.

"I been talkin' to your brother David this mornin'," still easily, "an' he told me how 'twas with him, how he had dreadful bad luck, an' was sick, an' all like that, an' how he mortgaged his farm, an' couldn't keep up th' interest, an' how it came time so as th' law 'lowed you to have it, if you was a mind to—an'—how you've took it, an' he ain't got anythin'."

The two men watched her out of their crafty eyes. They were years younger than David, but their faces were old with cunning and greed.

were old with cunning and greed. "That's right; it's th' law," said

Abner.

"It ain't th' gospel," retorted Calista fiercely, then quelled herself into smooth speech again. "He says he's got a chance to make money quick on it, sellin' th' timber to Lot Pratt for his mill."

The brothers exchanged a swift

warning.

"He tol" me Lot Pratt wanted to buy it himself from you." She read the warning.

"Offered us twenty-two hundred dollars for one o' th' poorest farms in th' hull valley," Abner answered her.

Again she caught Cephas' glance to his younger brother, and, quick at human nature if not at business, understood the older as the harder, because

duller-witted, man to move.

"That's an awful sight o' money, Abner," she said, still in her rôle of sweet reasonableness, though in the back of her brain she cried: "Break your brother's heart for twenty-two hundred dollars!"

"An' we need just 'bout that sum right now to put into this place, new stock an' like that to get it so's it'll pay. Can't take up an ol' neglected farm, an' run it same as you would one in use for

years."

Abner's tone was still mild; he was wondering behind his cunning eyes why his brother David had ever broken off with this handsome, spirited girl; just David's general lack o' gumption probably.

"Dave's a remark'ble stout man; he can get his day's work anywheres,"

Cephas spoke for the first time.

"He ain't very stout right now."

Calista still curbed herself in conciliation. "Can't much more'n hold him-

self together in a rockin'-chair."

"He's got all his stock lef', th' colt, an' all them—powerful good stock, too," assured Abner. "Dave's always took th' best o' care o' his critturs."

"Feeds 'em too high," put in Cephas

in his heavy voice.

"Oh, he won't starve; 'tain't that I come to talk over." Calista leaned forward with brilliant eyes and rose cheeks. "It's his home he prizes. Why, Cephas, why, Abner, there can't any one o' us understand just how Dave sets by that ol' place. It's been in his father's family for more years'n any one can count back, an' it'll just break his heart to be turned out o' it."

"Why, for th' matter o' that, Calista, 'twas our father's just as much as Dave's. I guess me an' Ceph's are Maltbys same as him." Abner laughed

at his own reasonableness.

"No, you ain't!" cried Calista passionately. Then slowly choosing her words: "You ain't gentle, like he is. I mean to say, you've got a lot o' th' Bill faculty an' business seem, an' Dave he's like his mother's folks, kind o' fanciful, an' full o' feelin's."

She hated herself for her hypocrisy,

but the cause claimed her.

"Dave send you here as his lawyer?" Cephas asked meaningly, and a smile broadened his hatchet face.

Calista was too far out of herself to

be abashed thus.

"No," simply. "I plotted it out myself."

"What you come for, anyhow?"

again Cephas.

"Won't you let him have his farm back for a year?" She answered his question with hers. "He'll pay you every bit he owes; he did his father's debts."

"Took him ten year," put in Cephas.

"You see we need th' money right now, to stock up this farm. That twenty-two hundred's worth twice that sum o' money four years from now," Abner explained patiently.

"You know what Dave does with th' best part o' his earnin's?" Cephas had a feminine way of following his own

trail of thought.

Calista shook her head.

"Pays it to ol' Mis' Beulah Tucker for th' keep o' that grandson o' hern that Enoch run over an' crippled up for Mis' Tucker couldn't even sue Ene. Judge tol' me so himself, 'cause th' boy ran right out in front o' Ene's fast horses."

"Oh!" cried Calista. "Oh, an' you

turn him out o' his home!"

"Dave was all took up with Enoch after father died," said Abner severely,

as if at a fault.

"It's your own brother; he's in misfortune. Won't you give him just a year's chance?" Calista pleaded, her slender body bent forward as if her very bones traveled with her spirit. "Don't you prize your own flesh and blood?"

"Of course if Dave's helpless, we'll take care o' him," Abner said, with dignity. "We shan't let him go on th' town."

"I do take thought o' my own." Cephas was touched at last. "I got a boy an' girl a-comin' 'long. I can't do nothin' to prejudice their start in th' world."

"Just a year, one little bit o' a year," implored the advocate. "If he don't pay, then fling him out, anywhere.'

Cephas closed his thin lips like a trap; he did not even say "no" again. Abner shuffled his feet, and cast his eyes down; he was not all miser yet.

"Business is business, Calista," he muttered, "an' I can't do nothin' with-

out I have Cephas' consent.'

Calista sank down, down through a thousand fathoms of the icy sea of disappointment; then she rose to the air again, buoyed up by the unquenchable spirit that had held her soul in her body in all the years of her grandfather's

crushing rule. Her nimble invention was flying quick on a new trail.

"You closed th' bargain with Lot

Pratt yet?"

"Not yet," said Abner, with caution. "If 'twas so as I could offer you fifty dollars more'n he does, would you take it ?"

The brothers shot hawk glances at one another. Was this a mad woman

come to treat with them?

"You bring us that much money, hard cash, down afore to-morrow noon, an' th' farm's yours," said Abner, grinning, and Cephas nodded.

Calista rose politely.

"I'll be back afore a great while," she said, with entire calm, for this emprise, seething in strangeness within, yet wore the outer fashion of extreme decorum.

The brothers bowed her out, as grave

The colt went down the Johnny Cake Road at a clip that pierced even his driver's armor of detachment from all human risks.

"My stars!" she breathed, wrapping the reins around her hands. "I hope if I meet folks comin' from the fair, they'll be knowin' 'nough to give me th'

The wind leaping along the treetops, the white clouds flying before it on an amethyst sky, the river galloping by her feet, the whirl and dance of leaf, and twig, and dust, all were ministers to the heady spirit within her. She was affoat on a great sea of exhilaration; to-morrow she might be cast torn and bleeding upon some forlorn headland, or drowned in the whelming waves; now she knew only the sweep and salt of it. "Blow wind; swell billow, and swim bark: the storm is up, and all is on the hazard."

She passed Emm'line's cottage, trig and shining like herself, and just beyond came upon the commanding dwelling of Jesse's father, the old

judge. "Guess judge won't take his rheumatics to th' fair," she told herself, as the colt galloped up the drive. And, sure enough, there on the porch was the iron-gray figure, "the judge" to Pettipaug for half a cen-

"I dunno as I want him to think th' circus is comin' to pass th' night with him."

She dragged the colt into s o m e semblance of the usual equine amble, before t h e w i d e porch.

The judge greeted her with the ceremony of an elder time, handing her into his office with mild pomp, and sending for cake and wine before he would talk business.

"You find yourself in need of a little sum for

housekeepin' expenses, Calista Virginia?" he said, with a kindly gleam of his glasses for her; she had been christened his wife's name, and he always gave her the full roll of it.

Calista blushed and laughed; here was unexpected ease of opening.

"Ves sir; it's money I come to see

"Yes, sir; it's money I come to see bout."

The judge inclined gravely. "Your grandfather has left you in very liberal circumstances, my dear, very liberal indeed."

"I always viewed it that gran'ther was real poverty poor."

The girl remembered the patching



"It ain't th' gospel," retorted Calista fiercely.

and the darning, the scrimping and the saving that had been her portion of labor under the sun.

"Your grandfather was a prudent man," said the judge reprovingly. "You think you need as large a sum as fifty dollars?"

Calista's laugh was near to hysterics. "Gran'ther was worth more'n what ol' Cap'n Fairchild was?" she urged craftily.

The judge fumbled in his safe.

"Captain Fairchild was consid'ble well off, but your grandfather was what would be called a rich man. There's his two bank books, an' his shares in

th' mill, an' th' railroad stock, an' there's th' deed o' th' farm." He laid one paper carefully upon another. "Perhaps you were not aware that your grandfather had a deed of th' farm made out to you in due form a month before he died?"

He handed her a blue document.

Calista studied it curiously, wrapt for a moment out of the greater issue; was the great ancient tavern and all its rich tillage and lush pastures of a verity hers to have and to hold? She woke to a sense of the judge's voice telling over the contents of the varied papers.

"I-I-need-a-large sum, judge." She thought of David, lonely, sorrowful in his ruined home, and her courage flooded in upon her like a tide. "I need twenty-two hundred an' fifty dollars,

now, please."
"What say?" The judge looked as if he could not have heard.

"I need twenty-two hundred dollars right now, quick, to-night, sir."

The old judge was dyed in fifty years of dealing with poor, crazed human nature, so he inquired with deliberate calm:

"What is your need of that large amount, Calista Virginia?"

"I want to buy a farm." The answer

was quick on the query.
"As an investment?"

"I don't know, sir. I want it."

Her eyes, alight with all the fires of her spirit, burned upon him; her voice

was like a trusting child.

"I have no authority over you, my child," for indeed Calista seemed very young, and foolish, and helpless. "Once your grandfather's money is in your hands, you can spend it as you deem wisest, but th' law allows me a year to settle th' estate, an' I certainly will not put into your hands now any such enormous amount of money to make ducks an' drakes of."

"But it is mine!"

"Not until th' year is over."

The judge crowded the papers back into his safe as if he feared she might snatch them out of his hands. So great was his haste, he left the farm deed upon his desk.

"Judge," said Calista, and she stood up tremblingly, "if I can have that money right now in my hand, I don't care if I never have any more o' what gran'ther's lef' me long as I live."

"I have not that amount in my safe," said the judge patiently, as to a child.

"But you could give me a piece o' paper that would mean it. Gran'ther took 'em to th' bank down to Saybrook often." She had never seen a check.

"Be reasonable, Calista Virginia. What is it you wish to do with this

She drew close to him, her small, work-hardened hands clasped tightly in front of her; a child before a stern

schoolmaster.

"I want to buy David Maltby's farm back from his half-brothers that have got it by his mortgage, an' they are as cruel as death; they're goin' to turn him out o' his own ol' home, where he was born!" The words were as rapid as the heartbeats that tore them out.

Now, indeed, was the judge sure she was crazed; what to his judicial memory were the vows of old time between a boy and girl courting in the

lanes?

"No," he said kindly. "No." his mild negative had the implacability of the soft tide. "No," he said, while Calista prayed, and wrung her hands, and shed the hard, bitter tears of an

unweeping woman.

Worn out at last, she bent under the iron of his will—poor, little Calista, trained to "the everlasting nay" of her grandfather's harsh commands, and crept, bruised and beaten, out of the office. She hardly heard the judge's soothing council; she made no reply to his anxious good-by; she did not notice that he held the colt for her while she climbed into the wagon.

It seemed a savage thing that this one day she claimed for her own out of all the grinding years should be ruined before it had seen its whole full course. One holiday, flawless, perfect, surely life owed her. And she would have it, too! It mattered not "how charged with punishments the scroll" of the hidden hours, this one day should be molded to the heart's desire. Her eyes danced like fireflies, her face crinkled into a grimace like a malicious pixy.

"It's mine; they can't get behind that. I don't care what kind o' a go round they stir up 'bout it. I've run off from my house, an' I've got my name up to th' Maltbys, for a brazen-faced hussy, an' judge, he thinks I'm crazier'n ol' Hewdy. I might's well break th' commandments now; I'll have all the rest o' my life to repent in. I ain't a-goin' to waste my good day a-carin' now."

She leaped out feather light, hitched the colt to a low-limbed tree, and slipped back to the judge's house, furtive as the thief she meant to be. She hoped the judge was back on the porch reading the county paper, an afternoon rite that not even the antics of mad clients were allowed for long to inter-

rupt.

Calista scouted about the grounds. Dan, the hired man, was deep in the barn; a faint whistle placed him. Hannah, the "help," was rattling dishes in the kitchen; the judge's wife would be at the fair. The family was all told. Under the lilacs by the outer door of the judge's office, Calista slipped off her shoes; then she laid an inquiring hand upon the knob. Here it was touch and go, for the judge was not twenty feet away, on the porch; his back was to her, but he could turn quickly. She screwed the knob around grain by grain. Suppose the door were locked! If it squeaked! No, it opened noiselessly, and the judge did not move.

On the desk where he had forgotten it lay the thin blue paper that meant her farm; she could see her own name in the town clerk's bold hand. She slid it off the desk, and thrust it into the waist

of her dress.

The judge stirred, hitched his chair about, and stood up. Calista, "a professin' Christian," who had never told eyen a child's white fib in all her days, whirled her brain through all the circles of invention to form a lie of strength enough to bear her over the gulf of discovery.

The judge sat down again, facing half to the door this time. Calista

moistened her lips, inched along to the door, and stood in it, watching the reader with indrawn breath. Well, she had her story handy. She closed the door with fearful care, glided past the lilacs, and was safe behind their gloom. Now for Abner and Cephas before the judge should sort his papers.

The day was going fast; the wind had fallen asleep, and a motionless chill had taken its place; a heavy Indian red barred the sky. Winter threatened just

over the hill.

Cephas and Abner received her again in the grim foreroom, darking now to the night. They had turned the subject on every side since she left, and their views were tinged with humor.

"You an' Dave goin' into partnership in this farm business, eh, Calista?"

grinned Abner.

"What you want o' Dave's place, anyhow? Found a gold mine into it?" the more stolid Cephas.

"Yes," laughed Calista. "Want

shares?"

Her courage was ebbing with the day. The airy dream was fast breaking; she could feel the damp, dull clay of reality weighing heavy on her.

"Want to buy still?" Abner, jocose

as ever.

"What do you say to a swop?" She smiled wanly at them.

"What you got to offer?"

"My farm—the tavern farm my gran'ther left me—for David's farm." She held the stolen deed toward

"What!" cried Abner, his thin voice cracking with amazement. "An' all th'

acres o' timber land, too?"

The girl saw the pines under which she and Davy had long ago parted, and shuddered to the sound of Abner's axe in their branches.

"Not the timber land, none o' that." Her voice was as much like business tones as abstract conception could make

it.

Cephas' lids narrowed till only a line of light leveled at his brother.

"Well, I dunno as we want your farm 'specially," he drawled.

The owner of that farm had never



She slid it off the desk, and thrust it into the waist of her dress.

heard of "vaulting ambition that o'erleaps itself," but native wit pricked her at that glance. "Ceph's too kind o' ca'm over it. He's in a tew for fear he won't get it."

"Of course," she flung out at a venture, "I'd be 'bliged to have somethin' besides, maybe as much as five hun-

dred dollars."

"Pretty keen sum o' money you ask, Calista," said Abner.

"What you want to trade your good farm for?" reiterated Cephas.

"Five hundred dollars an' a poor, ol' stony homestead with just one timber piece for all my acres an' acres o' sightly land." Calista seemed to herself an auctioneer crying "Going! Going!" "Make it three an' we'll talk," said Abner, and then Calista knew she was safe.

"Five an' th' offer's for to-night only."

Through the argle-bargle of papers and deeds, signings and countersigning, Calista held herself in bonds of iron will, for she trembled, and quivered, and broke into a cold moisture as if she were kin to the young horse neighing for her outside.

At last the business was over, the mystified brothers left to their surmises, and she was out in the cool, red-lighted twilight flying down the rutted old road.

The farm was black now in sharp silhouette against the sunset. She blanketed the colt, because he was one of David's loved "critturs," and left him in the barn still harnessed, for something told her she

must be quick at the end of her rainbow ere it fade.

"David," she called, "you there?" Then anxiously: "Dave, Dave."

The man came out into the kitchen doorway; he had lighted a lamp in the room; in its wavering light he loomed more than man's size.

more than man's size.
"That you, Cassy?" His voice shook

in a pathetic eagerness.

Calista came close to him on the step. "I got you back your farm, Dave," she said quite simply, and put the canceled mortgage in his hand.

"Thank God!" The words were drawn up from the very deeps of his

heart.

Neither one spoke again. Calista

could hear his heart throbbing in a long sigh like a sob, and her own beating quick and little, like a child running. At last David spoke, in a voice of exaltation:

"Cassy, I always said you could wile th' birds off th' trees! I got my home back. I'm a man 'gain. No fear but

I'll do a man's work."

Relief swept her for an instant; he had asked no explanations of how and why, the event itself was all sufficing.

"I got my home back."

His gaze went past her out over the darkling fields no more under the curse

of an alien touch.

The girl gasped in an extremity of terror, for at his words, as if at a magician's wand, her dream crashed in ruins about her; her holiday fled to the lost sun, and the bleak night closed in upon her. She was homeless, she had trailed her maidenly conduct in the dust before the mean view of Cephas and Abner, she was a thief, albeit of that which was her own, and-shame scorched her in its fires-she had sacrificed and dared all this for a man who had years ago cast her off, a thing undesired of him.

She saw herself in the sick light of to-morrow explaining her course to Emm'line and Aunt Phrony, and all-the other kith and kin foregathered from the East and the West, to wait upon her trial; she heard the wind of gossip shrilling past her as the voices of Pettipaug swept it from house to house, until it passed out of village limits, and even the "Cretes and Arabians and the dwellers beyond Mesopotamia" would cackle with mirth over Calista Lay, thirty years old, who one day went lovecracked over Dave Maltby. She pictured David himself, and here was the lowest circle of horror, astounded and pitiful, the deed he could not take useless in his hand,

Emm'line, and gran'ther, and all the rest of the hard, dominating relatives were right; she could not be trusted to herself. She had owned one only holiday in her life, and she had rioted in it like a creature senseless and shameless.

Her knees sunk under her; she

caught the door frame for help. David's hand was laid on her shoulder, a hand with masculine force in it now.

"What made you break off with that

city fellow?' "City fellow?" trembled out Calista

in amaze.

"Him that was educated so high up, an' had a big store up to th' city. "You mean Wilson Holbrook?

never was tokened to him, David." "Why not?" His voice had a vital

ring to it.
"I didn't ever set th' least in th'

world by him," simply.

"Didn't he court you?" stressfully.

"Yes."

"Didn't you tell him if 'twas so as you could get free from me you'd wed him?"

"No."

"Your Gran'ther Bates told me 'twas so, standin' here in this very yard fifteen year ago this August.'

"Gran'ther urged me on to wed him -after-after"-her eyes fell before insistently—"that August. wouldn't, not though he an' they all o' 'em worked on me for months." The valor and the suffering of that lonely battle against the host thrilled in her

voice.

"He made me think 'twas so. I wasn't but twenty year ol', Cassy, an' I thought he must sure 'a' got hold o' your feelin's, so I gave you up!"

They faced each other in a pale silence, the gulf of the years yawning before them. David took a step forward as if thus he would lessen it.

"But there ain't a day gone by in all those fifteen years that I ain't thought o' you, Cassy, my little girl, an' longed for you, an' mourned for you till I couldn't bear th' ache o' it hardly. If I give you up like a coward 'cause I was poor an' had an unprofitable farm, an' he was a man o' great means, I've paid th' price o' it in loneliness an' heart hunger. Oh, my little lost girl!" He covered his face with his maimed

Calista drew it down with a tender

"There, dear, there, don't you take on

so," she soothed, while tears wetted her own cheeks.

"When you come in on me this mornin'---" His voice broke. "I don't know as you ever experienced despair?" he whispered.

Calista smiled patiently. Was there any height or depth of suffering untrod

by her these long years?

"Then you was there like part o' my dream. But I couldn't tell you how my whole heart called out to you." The words came in hard gasps, their broken passion strange in the calm Dave of the old days; even on that last tragic night he had not been so moved. was a ruined man, without a home to bring my wife to, nor means to earn one, an' sick an' helpless. Then you brought me back my home. I prize it like it was bone o' my bone an' flesh o' my flesh, but that ain't why I thanked my God. 'Twas 'cause I could ask you like a man. Oh, Cassy!"

He held out his arms to her, and Calista ran into them, and the crippled giant and the slender girl clung together like children who have fallen out

and now make up.

"There, now," said David, brushing his tears away shamefacedly, "I'll hurry 'long my hand to get it healed up, an' you get your settin' out under way, an' we'll be wedded this time next month, an' keep house together right here where we used to play at it."

Calista trembled in the circle of his arms, her head against his shoulder.

"Oh, Davy," she shivered, "a weddin's th' awfulest undertakin'; there's hundreds o' towels, an' sheets, an' pillowcases to hemstitch, an' garments to tuck till your fingers drop off, an' cakes to bake. I did it all for Emm'line's weeks an' weeks, an' I can't go through it 'gain, not if I have to give you up!"

"You needn't, my little dearie." He stroked her bright hair with his well hand. "We won't make any kind o' a go round to it, an' you can have mother's sheets an' fixin's, an' never worry your little head 'bout new ones. I don't desire a great to-do; if you'll stand up with me in that little pink gownd you

got on now, you'll be th' prettiest bride in the township."

Calista clung to him piteously.

"I took a holiday, Davy, from everybody, an' all th' things that are so kind o' bindin' on me all th' time, an' now it's over, an' to-morrow there'll be Aunt Phrony, an' Emm'line, an' all th' folks a-talkin' an' a-pulley-haulin' us apart like they did afore; an' you won't be with me, I'll be all 'lone to face 'em, an' maybe things'll seem different."

David held her from him with his

well hand.

"You ain't goin' to feel different, Cassy, are you?"

His eyes drew her very heart up to meet the love in them.

"I don't want I ever should leave you, Davy," she whispered.

His smile broadened.

"You shan't, my little dearie. We'll celebrate this holiday o' yours like we can't ever celebrate 'nother one 'long as we may live. We'll be wedded in it.

"Oh, David, we can't!"

"I'd like to ask, why not? Parson Card's to home now, 'cause it's a meetin' night, an' it won't be more'n two steps for the colt to get us there. He baptized you an' me when we was in swaddlin' clothes; I guess he won't make 'larmin' work 'bout weddin' us."

Calista gazed up at Davi. smoothshaven and clean, but in homely farm garb, and then at herself in the pink cambric, berry-stained and

marked.

"He'll think we're crazy," she pro-

tested, but faintly.

"Maybe he will, but he won't care. That's th' worth o' Parson Card. Folks is always folks to him, no matter how they carry on. You ready?"

Wondering, in a dream, Calista let David lead her out into the lane. He walked with his long stride only a little slackened by weakness, and he spoke in the tones of authority to the colt. The last red bar faded out of the sky.

"There, your holiday's ended!" cried David, and caught her to him in a pas-

sion of tenderness.

"No, it ain't," breathed Calista, her arms about him. "It's just begun!"



Youth

By Wallace Irwin

ILLUSTRATED BY HY. MAYER

MET an antique of a whaler,
A hundred and thirty years old,
Who, tired of the life of a sailor,
Tobacco and chewing gum sold.

"Dear sir," I remarked, "though entrancing
It is to be earning your wage,
You mustn't forget you're advancing
A trifle beyond middle age."

"To tell ye the purified truth, sir,"

He squeaked with an air of content,

"When I think of the perils of youth, sir,

I'm glad that me beauty has went.

"When I was a schoolboy of forty
I met a sweet damsel named Liz,
Who was somewhat my senior, but sporty—
But, oh, when her jealousy riz,

"She flew in hy-stericks and chided If ever I looked at a gal. At last she jest plumb suicided When once I went walking with Sal.

"When I was a youth turnin' fifty
I met pretty Matty McGee.
Her temper was ardent but shifty,
Her age somewhat older than me.

"A nice, pleasant sweetheart she pruved me, And I with affection wa'ant lax, Till once, jest to show how she loved me, She chopped off me ear with an axe.

"At sixty I went to Gibraltar
And met an Algerian belle,
But just as we got to the altar
I bade 'er a suddint farewell.

"So she chased me from here to St. Thomas Where, hirin' a lawyer of fame, She sued me for breach o' the promise, Me paying the bill for the same.

"So on till the age o' one hundred
When, being less wild in me life,
In the foolishest manner I blundered
By seekin' a sensible wife.

"So I married a plump centenarian
Who wasn't flirtatious nor vain;
A decent, refined vegetarian,
Home-keeping—but awfully plain.

"She hated both race tracks and dances, And the musical-comedy stage; She mocked all me passing romances And says: 'Sol, remember yer age!'

"So I got a divorce in a hurry,

(A detail what filled me with pain)

But I says, so I says: 'Shall I worry?

Nay, I'll start me life over again.'

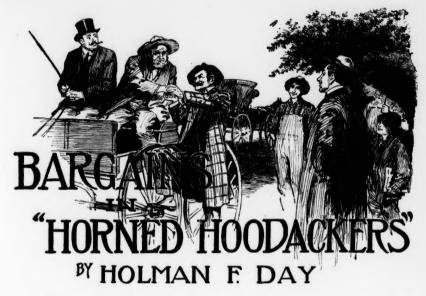
"So I fooled with a thousand flirtations, Me arts with the fair bein' deft. Midst maidens o' forty-six nations I busted their hearts right and left.

"At the age of one hundred and twenty
I quietly says to meself:

'Though charms I has still got a-plenty,
It's time they was laid on the shelf.'

"So now, quite devoid of emotion,
I laughs in a sceptical state
At me follies of youthful devotion
When I was but seventy eight."





HIRAM LOOK had not been as lucid in regard to his reasons for desiring to visit the State's metropolis as Cap'n Aaron Sproul wished. The cap'n had been aboveboard in the matter of his own business with sailor frankness.

Having finished that business, Hiram tagging at his heels with the restless air of a man who is wasting time, he buttoned his coat, patted his pockets with the remark that "cargo seemed to be under hatches all right," and stated that now he was ready to accompany his friend.

"Glad to hear you say it," announced Hiram briskly. "Now we can be gettin' down to real cases in the way of business. I hate this fubbin' 'round."

"Do you call buyin' an eighth into a schooner, lookin' up four titles on real estate, and contractin' for a year's salt pork supply for our jail—do you call that fubbin' 'round? You've been mumblin' behind my back a whole hour about havin' business to 'tend to. I haven't kept you back from goin' off to 'tend to it."

"I believe in friends stickin' together in case of need, and for the sociability of the thing," Hiram affirmed. "If there's anything I hate it's stubbin' around a city all alone. I've done the square with you, ready to grab in and help in time of need. So now you come along with me!"

"I ain't much of a hand to sail under sealed orders. What is it you're goin' to do?"

Cap'n Sproul's last errand had been in a bank. Hiram led the way to the lobby, and headed for the outside door. He flourished his hand to invite his friend to hurry.

"You'll know when it's time for you to know. It's important, and I want to be at it."

"Judgin' from the way you act," grumbled the cap'n at his heels, "you're gettin' ready to start a national bank or run for the Presidency of the United States."

"There's other things in this world that's important besides monkeyin' with old schooners and tryin' to gouge folks on real-estate deals. I've followed the show business in my time. Some folks can sneer, but the show business can stack just as high as anything they've

ever been into."

"If ever I said anything about the show business it's been when your actions called for something to be said. I hain't ever had any cause to complain of you except when some circus fit has busted out in you. It's a pizen in the blood, that's what it is! If there's any circussin' to this what you've started out on, you'll have to excuse me. You ain't a responsible human bein' when you're circussin'."

"When I sold my round-top, vans, lemon peel, and hunk of glass, I quit the circus business, and you know it. You ain't rabbit enough to leave me on the chips here to-day after I've run my legs off waitin' and tendin' on you all

this forenoon, are you?"

Cap'n Sproul, trudging along behind his hurrying friend, could not determine in his own mind exactly what help Hiram had given him. He only remembered that every item of business he had attended to had been hurried and harassed by his impatient companion. But he refrained from comment, and kept pace.

Finally they turned in at a livery

stable.

"Hitch-up is all ready for you, accordin' to the order you telefoamed, Mr. Look," said a hostler. "And I've got on track of them horned hoodackers. Feller named Spooner owns 'em, and he lives down forty-one Cedar

Street."

Hiram jotted down the information in his notebook, the cap'n scowling at him. The name "horned hoodackers" conveyed baleful hint of the circus business. But the old showman gave him no time to ask questions. Two horses were hitched to an express wagon, and Hiram climbed to the seat after he had pushed the grumbling cap'n up over the wheel. He drove out and away at a lively gait.

"Something for the parlor whatnot or to be framed and presented to the Methodist Church in Newry?" inquired

the cap'n, with grim satire.

"What?"

"Them horned hoodackers."

"It doesn't take much to fuss you up, does it?" suggested his friend acridly. "Now, if you can't be happy without you know the whys, whats, and wherefores of everything that comes up, I'll try to ease your mind for you." Shifting the reins into one hand, he pulled a letter from his pocket. "Read it." Hiram's tone was pitched to a note of resignation. "I don't want you braddin' at me all the rest of the day. Read it! It's my business, and it ain't yours, but read it! And then see if you can set quiet and come along."

The letterhead bore the words:

PEACE AND GOOD CHEER SOCIETY OF SCOGGIN COUNTY

It began:

Dear Mr. Look: There has come into my possession a handbill saying that you generously donated your services and prizes for sports for the children of the Cuxabexis County Sunday-school Convention some months ago. The Peace and Good Cheer Society of our beloved county will have its annual field day in May. Though I have not heard directly regarding the success of the convention I have no doubt that a gentleman of your well-known ability made the sports long to be remembered. May we not hope that you will do the same for our children? We are—

Cap'n Sproul did not trouble himself to read any farther. He stuck the letter back into its envelope, and returned it to Hiram. He was silent.

"Well?" queried the showman tartly.

"I hain't got northin' to say."
"You have, too. Out with it, and

have it over with."

"I would only say I don't see why you're goin' to all this trouble of huntin' up horned hoodackers, whatever they be. Take what you had there at the Cuxabexis Sunday-school Convention, that barbecue, greasy pig race, free fight, grand riot, and the trimmin's, and I don't see how you're goin' to improve on it for a genteel way of makin' children happy. Of course I don't know what horned hoodackers are, and they may be savager than your Scotaze Ancient and Honor'ble Firemen's Associa-

tion in carryin' out a pig race, but as long's I'm helpin' you out on this thing I should say stick to the Ancients. If you feel that you want to outdo what you done before, give 'em shotguns loaded with rock salt. Yes, I donno but that last is a good idee. Give 'em shotguns and wind up that Peace and Good Cheer field day in the way it ought to be wound up. Give the children a good time, say I!"

The rusty red of anger flamed in Hiram's cheeks.

member the days of childhood, them times be," agreed the cap'n. "Shotguns and rock salt this time, I should say! Get your name up, and they'll have you managin' these religious conventions till you can make a reg'lar business of it."

"You'd better not make any more remarks along that line," Hiram ad-

vised.

"Have got 'em all made," retorted Cap'n Sproul. "And seein' that I hain't got anything more in the way of con-



His friend was in violent altercation with the baggage master.

"I paid the bills for them sports, and the sports was on the square and there wasn't anything that would even disturb the infant in its cradle until them red-gilled wappenhoots of Vienny tried to steal that barbecue away from my Ancients. And then I told my crowd to wade in, Sunday school or no Sunday school. I done right, and I'll stick to it. But even at that the children got something suiteder to 'em than pomes and palaver. Children want to be entertained, and I done it!"

"Pleasant to look back on, as we re-

versation to offer, suppose you set me down at the depot and let me go home."

"No, sir!" blazed Hiram. "A friend has got some claims on another friend, and you're goin' along with me."

He consulted his notebook, turned into a narrow street, and, after studying the door numbers as they proceeded, pulled up and passed the reins to the cap'n. The latter patiently accepted.

"It may be aidin', abettin', and connivin' if I only act as killick for this craft," he muttered, watching Hiram's

disappearance into the building, "but I'm goin' that far in the thing, and no farther. Prob'ly here's where he gets the horned hoodackers, whatever they be. Name sounds as though they'd be partickerly helpful in breakin' up a Sunday-school convention. The managers of that Peace and Good Cheer Society must lead a retired life over in Scoggin County, if they never heard how Hime Look managed things the last time he undertook to run religion and a firemen's muster on a single But when folks are out to get something for northin' you can't expect 'em to see much with a silver dollar stuck into each eye."

In these and similar musings he passed the time until Hiram came out of the house. A man was helping him with a crate. In the crate was a monkey of unusual size. The crate was shoved in behind, and Hiram drove away with his new purchase. The showman offered no explanation, and the cap'n refrained from questions for a long time. But he ventured at last.

"On the lit'rary programmy?" he asked, jabbing his thumb over his shoulder. "And if so, singin' or just

speakin' a piece?"

They were in front of a tobacco store in a cheap quarter of the city, the dingy windows piled high with dustylooking cigars.

Hiram jerked the horses to a standstill, and again left the reins in the

cap'n's hands.

After some minutes inside, apparently engaged in bargaining, he came out, and piled many boxes of cigars into the wagon. Then he drove on.

Cap'n Sproul's rebellious mood

found its sole relief in satire.

"Beginnin 'to seem kind of nice and Sunday schooly," he suggested. "Has the old, familiar flavor, hey? Just before the benediction every child steps up and gets a cigar with the compliments of Mister H, Look."

"Every child has got a father at home, hasn't he?" demanded Hiram. "Don't you want to teach children to remember the hard-workin' parents at home? That's a part of Sunday-school trainin'—or it ought to be. And I've got a scheme of my own about it."

The cap'n glanced at him inquiringly. "Step up, children, one and all! View the monkey on the pole. Captured in the wilds of Africa and brought here at great expense to help you in your studies in nat'ral history." Hiram had pitched his voice high, falling naturally into the tone that he had used for so many years as barker in front of his tent. The spell of the old circus days was upon him. "And after havin' improved your mind hit the monkey with a baseball and take home a segar to father! One and all right this way!"

Cap'n Sproul noted sourly that the folks on the sidewalk were listening with considerable interest. A man with a twisted mustache, a billy-cock hat, and a frock suit of loud pattern stepped off the sidewalk, and halted Hiram by shouting delighted recognition.

"Any corner in it for me?" inquired the new arrival, after the usual preliminaries marking the meeting of old

friends.

"No gazara game on the grounds. Sweet and innercent children bein' entertained. Can't see 'em trimmed, even

by friends."

"Well, you have certainly settled down amongst the punkin-viners for good and fair," exploded the other. He set his foot on the wheel hub, and gave the cap'n a supercilious stare that made the old shipmaster's hair bristle. "You'll be havin' dressed lettuce under your chin, too, before long!" This was plain and slighting reference to the cap'n's beard. "But I ain't workin' the envelope game now, Hime. Straight, legitimate, and elevatin' science for the benefit of humanity."

He produced an article from the tail pocket of his voluminous coat. The thing was of glass, and had two bulbs with a glass tube connecting them. Before Cap'n Sproul could prevent he had thrust one of the bulbs into an unwill-

ng fist.

"Hold it tight, uncle," he directed. "Watch the rihooferus blood flow from one bulb to the other and test your health."

The heat of the cap'n's hand was forcing a red liquid from bulb to bulb.

"That's a kaleoscope," he confided to his indignant patient. "From Latin words meanin' scoop the kale. Ah, I see you have a bad case of lunar blastitis. A course of my tiger-bone pellets at fifty cents the bottle will put you back on earth again for a good old age."

Cap'n Sproul promptly made a thrust to poke the bulb into the man's mouth. With a quick dab the stranger

recovered his property.

"There's nothin' about it to offend the most fastidious," he insisted. "Shows the wonders of nature, and wouldn't hurt even a Sunday-school picnic. Where's this event goin' to be pulled off? I'll be there."

"Bring a ring-the-canes outfit, and I'll let you onto the grounds," said Hiram. "But you can't sell pellets, Sunday-schoolers don't need 'em. Use your thingumajig to call the crowd

with-free show.'

"It doesn't sound like a big make,"

objected his friend.

"No big makes allowed," stated Hiram stoutly. "It's a May-day celebration I'm gettin' up for the children, and if you and the rest of the boys come up you'll have to be sociable."

"So be it! I won't bring a blush to the cheek of the Queen of the May. Things are dull down this way—and you never know what may be doin' outside the big show. Up Scoggin way, first of May? I'll pass the word to the boys. 'If you're wakin' call me early, call me early, mother, dear.'"

He marched off, humming the words

to ragtime.

When Hiram drove on the cap'n sat sidewise on the seat and glared at him until the showman got restive,

"If you see anything in partickler on me brush it off," said Hiram finally. "And if there's anything partickler in-

side of you spit it out."

"If I didn't know you as a man that allus pays his hundred cents on the dollar, with a good wife at home to sorrow if anything happens to you, and, generally speakin', square and straight, I'd report you as bein' a worse thing for this section than a combined run of the seven years' itch and the black plague. There must have been something terrible pizen about that circus

business you was in."

"When you get all done slurrin' the circus business, I reckon I can check off a few little items about some seafarin' people I know of, includin' old Cap Kidd. Haven't I shown you already that what I've got in behind us here is all for simple and innercent amusement? Didn't you hear me tell that fellow back there that the festival was goin' to be run on strickly moral grounds? What more do you want? Special excursion rates from Paradise to attract down the cherubs for them children to play leapfrog with? You're like the rest of them old fossils that think a young one ought to get all his fun out of checkers and the catechism."

"I see it ain't any good to argue with you," sighed the cap'n. "You're havin' a run of another one of them circus fits—the pizen in your blood workin' out. If it's the kind of a catnip bed you like, then go ahead and roll in it. But you'll have to get along without me. If you think I'm goin' to parade this city with a monkey in behind, you're mistaken. You set me down!"

"If that monkey is all that's botherin' you, I'll take the tribulation off'n your mind," Hiram returned, with a half sneer. "I'll swing around by the railroad station, and store him in the baggage room. Then I hope you won't object to my company if I presume to stay on board this wagon!"

The cap'n returned no reply, and they proceeded to their destination.

When the monkey crate and the cigars had been deposited, the cap'n had no real excuse for deserting his friend, though his brow was by no means clear.

"I reckon I'm crew, all right, and so I'll stick to the ship," he pondered, as Hiram drove away from the station. "But if ever the skull and crossbones was run up to the peak and a hard knot tied in the halyards, then this is the time."

But Hiram's next purchase was re-



He brought up with a jerk of the rope, dangling in air.

assuring. He visited a candy shop, and bought many pailfuls of mixed candies. Cap'n Sproul was not wholly at ease in his mind when Hiram loaded these into the wagon.

"The candy is all right," he grunted, "but he'll probably organize prize fights to settle how he'll divide it."

"I reckon," announced Hiram, regaining the reins, "that I'll haul this candy right down to the depot, and store it with the monkey. I've got a little special trip to make later, and I may need all my room in behind."

"Hiram," said the cap'n, as they approached the railroad station, his question following a long period of pondering, "before we cast off again from this depot dock, I want to ask you a plain, fair question, man to man—for if it ain't answered to my likin't then up comes my dunnage bag from the foks'l and I go ashore."

"I ain't advertisin' to be a 'cyclopedy, but I'm willin' to be accommodatin'," vouchs a f e d Hiram cau-

tiously.

"Has that special trip you mentioned a while back got anything to do with horned hoodackers? I ain't either sugar or salt, but if them horned hoodackers. whatever thev make you cautious about havin' that pailed candy in the same wagon with 'em, then it's an open question whether they're goin' to agree with me or not."

"I ain't sayin' there's anything such

things as horned hoodackers in the world," returned Hiram. "You might have overheard a word or so at the livery stable, but it's all an open question, all developments about it very uncertain and still to be investigated, and probably northin' comin' out of it, anyway. Lookin' for something to amuse, astonish, and instruct, and followin' clues to same, is slow and ticklish business, and you'll have to move as I move, slow and sure, takin' things as they come."

"It's certainly refreshin' to travel

'round with a man who can give you so much vallyble information offhand," Cap'n Sproul informed his glowering friend.

Hiram passed over the reins once more, and went into the baggage room, a pail of candy in each hand. cap'n heard a prompt shout of wrath, followed by remarks from Hiram which did not wholly accord with the Sunday-school mission he was on, and the next moment a monkey came bounding out of the open door, followed by a pail of candy that burst when it struck the sidewalk and scat-The monkey fled tered its contents. like a shadow, turned the corner into an alley, and disappeared. showed himself at the door for a moment, his face black with rage, and then dodged out of sight. It was so plain that he was much interested in something inside that the cap'n crawled down from the wagon, hitched the horses, and went in.

His friend was in violent altercation with the baggage master. Empty cigar boxes were everywhere, and thousands of broken cigars littered the floor.

"I ain't hired to stay inside here and dry nuss a monkey," the baggage master was informing Hiram with just as much heat as the latter displayed. "If your monkey busts out of his box, and amuses himself by settin' up in the segar trade that's your lookout, and it ain't mine. Only you'll pay me fifty cents for cleanin' up the mess."

The old showman repudiated the suggestion with more violent language, and tramped out, and boarded his

wagon.

In his perturbation he was for driving away before the horses were untied, but Cap'n Sproul "cast off the bow line," as he mentally observed, and

climbed up beside his friend.

"It's too bad you hadn't saved that part of the show for the field day," the cap'n ventured to remark after a discreet period of silence. "It would have got a good hearty laugh from the children. I'd have given a little something to have seen that myself. There ain't any animile I know of that can be so

busy when he's got something to be busy with as a monkey." He had picked up one of the cigars, and was unrolling it. "But you ain't very much out of pocket," he added consolingly. "Looks like this was brown paper soaked in tobacker juice. It wouldn't have made a child anyways pop'lar in the family to come home with a handful of these."

Hiram was not partial to conversation. With the reins between his knees he studied his notebook, growling further remarks about monkeys under his breath. Having gleaned his informa-

tion, he whipped up.

"Got a few more bargains in mind that you're goin' to snap up?" queried the cap'n innocently.

Hiram whirled on him.

"P'r'aps you think that one little hitch is goin' to make me give up the idee of providin' a cheerful day for helpless and innercent children. Some people I know of would get mad, and go home, and leave little children to mourn and suck their thumbs. I ain't that kind. They're goin' to have a show, and I'm goin' to give it to 'em. One monkey ain't goin' to stop me—nor any pertickler and admirin' friends of one monkey!"

"Pizen still in the blood!" muttered Cap'n Sproul. "It ain't had its run

yet!"

The next scheduled stop was at a barber shop. The notebook had provided the address. Hiram at last came forth from a back room leading a bulldog, at whose warped legs and villainous countenance the cap'n stared with some disquietude. But Hiram boosted the dog in behind, and drove away.

"Admittin' that dog fights do help out the festivities when a Sunday school is on a picnic," remarked the cap'n, not liking the way the dog was sniffing at his calves under the wagon seat, "couldn't you have got a savage one

nearer home?"

"Dog fight, you old oakum-whiskered handspike!" roared Hiram, thoroughly indignant. "Do you think that's all a dog is good for? There's a trick animal that will turn summersets, walk on

his forelegs, swing on a trapeze, and do the slide for life hangin' by his teeth. That fellow back there that trained him used to travel with my show. You may sneer about circussin'. but I reckon that a man that has trained a good dog to give a clean and snappy show has made more people happy than a slave driver of Portygee sailors. Now what could you do to amuse a crowd of children at a Sunday-school field day? Northin'! But that dog can. So I say the dog is—"
"I can stand slurs, and I've been

lappin' 'em down to-day considerably hearty for me, but you go to comparin' me with that bug-eved, sculpinmouthed tarrier you've got under this seat, and you'll find you're carryin' jokes and jollity too far."

"It's been just a wonderful day for humor, that's right, it has," retorted Hiram, "You'll have to excuse me, but when I get to larkin' and laughin' as much as I have to-day, I get sort of hysterical, and don't know exactly what I say. The best way is for you and me to stay quiet till we get our nerves calmed down so that we can talk without laughin' so much."

The cap'n accepted the advice with a

snort of disgust.

The old shipmaster was familiar with that part of the city that bordered the water front, and he noted with interest that Hiram was hurrying in that direction. Remembering the address given by the man at the livery stable, he grunted some remark to himself when they turned in at Cedar Street. Number forty-one on that avenue proved to be a rather untidy-looking tenement house, and from among its denizens Hiram finally extricated one Spooner, having refreshed his memory as to the name by reference to the note-

"Yes, that's what I call 'em." admitted Mr. Spooner, accompanying Hiram from the door to the wagon. "It's my own idee to call 'em that. If you're goin' before the public with something, you'd better make plans to set the public to wondering first of all what it is you've got. 'Spooner's Horned Hoodackers' starts 'em to wonderin' at the send-off. Half the battle has been won."

"Mebbe," admitted Hiram, "But you hain't got northin' very wonderful when you've got 'em all trained-best you can do. They ain't no partickler novelty. I've been in the show business most of my life, and I'm a good judge. What will they do so far's you've got 'em trained up to date?"

"Stand on their hind legs, waltz to a tune, box three rounds with gloves, and punch a bag with their horns till the cows come home. They'd rather punch that bag than eat."

"Northin' very wonderful," said Hiram, with buyer's pessimism. "Fellow that told me about 'em said he didn't know whether you wanted to sell or not. What price do you put on

'em?"

"No price goes on 'em," stated Mr. Spooner, with decision. "I'll have 'em do everything but talk before I'm done with 'em. But considerin' that their education is only a part way along, and that I'd like a little advertisin' and a small piece of spare change, I'll come to wherever you say with 'em for five dollars and travelin' expenses."

"Where be they?" inquired Hiram. "I'll have to give a look at 'em before I close. I'm entertainin' Sunday-school folks, and I don't want any flushes or

fakes.

A lofty retaining wall of granite blocks formed the opposite side of Cedar Street, and Mr. Spooner pointed to this and the strip of rusty April grass that showed above the top of the

wall.

"Park super is a friend of mine, and he lets me hitch 'em together, and turn 'em out up there till the grass gets green," he explained. "They're tied together with five or six feet of rope, and one of 'em sort of anchors the other. There's short way up," he said. "Come along, pointing to a ladder. and I'll show you something for your Sunday-school rinktum-dinktum-dittyoh that will send children home improved in mind and cheerful in spirit."

Hiram led the horses across the



"This is our finish!" yelped Cap'n Sproul.

street, swinging the wagon close under the retaining wall in order to be out of the way of the highway traffic. Cap'n Sproul surveyed him sullenly from the seat.

"I'll be kedge for these hosses till you get back, but I don't propose to set here and trot that blasted dog on my knee to keep him out of mischief."

The new purchase was glaring over the tailboard at a couple of intrusive street curs who were sniffing about the wagon. He was straining at the rope that secured him, and growled with a particularly menacing diapason.

"Don't you bring no dog up here," cried Mr. Spooner from the ladder.

"Them horned hoodackers don't relish dogs for a cent."

Hiram departed hastily on the trail of Mr. Spooner.

"You needn't worry about that dog," he informed the cap'n curtly. "A dog in the wagon is better than a lock on the door."

He disappeared over the edge of the

wall

The bench-legged defender of the castle edged back toward the seat, peering down over the wheels in a distinctly unamiable frame of mind, to judge from his growling. One of the curs in the street finally had the temerity to cock his muzzle airily up, and yap

shrill insult at the dog in the wagon. Dog in the wagon promptly accepted this as fighting talk, and leaped. He brought up with a jerk of the rope, dangling in air. When he began to writhe his collar slipped over his head. He fell on his back in the dust.

The curs were in no mood to wait. They scurried away, and the challenged followed as soon as he got his bearings. The cap'n noted that the route of the retreat was around the far corner of the retaining wall where

the park sloped to the street.

"They've gone the right way," he muttered. "Them dogs, and Hime Look, and the horned hoodackers, whatever they be, can hold a family reunion as soon as they get together up

there."

It was a rather bland April day, and the street was a quiet one. Once in a while a dray passed on its way to or from the wharves. Through an allev that opened in that direction Cap'n Sproul could gaze down the length of one populous wharf, at the end of which were steamboat landings. sparkle of blue water beyond comforted him a bit, and he filled his pipe, and waited for Hiram in a more placid frame of mind. Indulging in the vague hope that the fugitive dog would swing around into the presence of his new master, bringing his disturbance with him, he listened for sounds to float down over the edge of the wall. stillness reigned.

Finally came Hiram, easing himself down the ladder, Mr. Spooner following and continuing his eager praise of

what they had seen.

"Not bad—not at all bad," Hiram affirmed. "Good for amateur work on their hind legs, and so far's the bagpunchin' part goes, I'll take your word for it. Bring 'em along, and amuse the children. If I'm feelin' right, and have a little spare time, I'll polish 'em off with a few tricks that I—" He noticed the rope and the empty collar.

"Sufferin' whipsnakes! You hain't gone to work, have you, and let that log get away?"

"Seemin' to have important business

somewhere else, he left," stated the cap'n serencly. "He didn't take me into his confidence none. He's your dog, and he headed up around the corner, there, as though he was intendin' to get into closer touch with you."

A succession of shrill blats and gruff yelps broke in upon Hiram's violent reply to this calm explanation. He had climbed up beside the cap'n, and had taken the reins with a gesture that indicated his general distrust of the cap'n's ability to manage anything. Mr. Spooner, recognizing trouble among the hoodackers in the Elysian Fields above, scrambled up the ladder. Those below could hear the beat of hoofs on the turf.

"I knowed it! I smelt it!" screamed Mr. Spooner, standing on the ladder, his head above the wall. "I see trouble in the general style of the critter; that damnation dog of yourn is chasin' my goats! Here, you wall-eyed hell-bait, you leave go! Ca-nack! Ca-nack!

Ca-nack!"

It was evident to the cap'n that the goats knew their master's voice, and found encouragement therein and promise of protection. The hurrying hoofbeats sounded nearer and louder. Suddenly Mr. Spooner ducked down the ladder with a yell, and two objects that had aimed straight for him came hurtling over the edge of the wall. To Cap'n Sproul's affrighted gaze they were revealed as goats, a length of rope attaching one to the other.

All the preliminaries had conspired to make that tragedy a perfect one. Hiram had led the horses to the foot of the ladder for convenience's sake. Mr. Spooner's urgent voice had summoned his pets to the top of the ladder. When they came over the edge of the wall, the twin projectile was aimed just right. To the accompaniment of Hiram's shriek of rage and fear, they fell across the horses, a goat on one side, a goat on the other, and the rope did not part. Their horns dug into the flanks of the terrified horses.

Before either Hiram or the cap'n could leap they were off. They were off, too, at a speed that made escape

from the wagon too hazardous to be thought of. With that weight dragging across them, the reins were of little aid in controlling the wild rush. The horses selected their own avenue of escape. They made for the nearest alley, roared through it with a mightly scattering of garbage barrels, crossed a street, and took the straightaway course down the wharf.

"This is our finish!" yelped Cap'n Sproul, on his knees and clinging to the wagon seat. "It's your devilish circus business that has done it." In his terror his anger gave him words with which to reproach. "I hope you'll spend ten million years in hell ridin' a goat and huntin' for water!"

Traffic on the wharf gave way for them. Stationary objects suffered. A peanut roaster's stand furnished the most spectacular up-

heaval. Sparks and peanuts formed a nimbus around their catapulting turn-

Of other ravage and ruin the cap'n took no heed. Hiram was down on his knees beside him, shouting wordlessly. He had the ends of the broken reins in his hands. The sparkle of blue water at the end of the wharf no longer gave solace to Cap'n Sproul. He realized what their fate would be. There was reason in those maddened horses, their sides goaded by those terrible animals who had fallen from a clear sky.

The cap'n glanced down when they swept over the end of the wharf. Two men were baiting trawls in a little sloop that was hitched to the spiles. Even in that moment of horror he was gratified to note that with sailor alertness they jumped overboard, and escaped the destruction roaring down upon them. The next instant, with a crash, the wagon and horses plunged into the sloop.



When Cap'n Sproul came up to the surface, he found that he had been cast far out from the wharf.

When Cap'n Sproul came up to the surface, he found that he had been cast far out from the wharf when the wagon halted so tempestuously. Hiram was floundering near by.

A yawl from a fishing schooner rescued them. They were hoisted to the wharf, and, gasping, soaked, and strangling, sat down on the stringpiece beside two other men, who were also soaked and gasping. These two were the men of the sloop. They were staring down at bubbles that came bursting to the surface of the troubled, wreckage-strewed water. One of them at last recovered his voice.

"Well," he rasped, "you got your menagerie all lo'ded onto the Sadie and Susan all nice and satisfactory to yourselves and inquirin' friends, hey?"

Just then Hiram and Cap'n Sproul were incapable of reply.

"Now, that cargo is all on nice and comf'table, where was you thinkin' of

sailin' to? When folks is as handy about stowin' cargo as you be, it don't make much difference whether you leave any bottom in her, hey?"

There was the pounding of hurrying feet behind them, and Mr. Spooner came down the wharf on the run.

"Where be they? I didn't give you no authority to take my goats away!" he panted. "You took 'em, and drove off with 'em. It ain't no kind of way to do business. I want them goats back. I call on all of you as witnesses that they drove down here with my goats. They ain't no common goats."

Hiram arose, and clawed his stringy

hair out of his eyes.

"Common goats!" he sneered, white, trembling, the terror of death and the righteous anger of the living in his eyes. "No, them ain't common goats. And they've gone back where they be-

Mr. Spooner began further passionate tirade, but Hiram slapped him across the mouth, the act eliciting a grunt of gratitude from Cap'n Sproul.

"Here comes another one of your admiring friends and circussers," he remarked to Hiram, pointing up the wharf. "It's too bad he ain't trick dog enough to understand the English language. I figger you might have a few interestin' remarks to offer to him on the general subject of gettin' up a Sunday-school field day for the children."

It was the dog.

He came cheerfully slavering along the route of the late parade, wagging his stump of a tail, and still plainly possessed of a keen interest in the probable whereabouts of those singular horned When he arrived at the stringpiece, Hiram poised himself, and kicked with maniacal fury. The dog went overboard and under, and Hiram turned away.

"You open your yawp to me again," he informed Mr. Spooner, "and I'll kick you over, too. If there's any bill owin' from me to anybody else for what has happened, that bill will be paid, and that same applies to you," he said, wagging his finger at the fishermen. "The law will 'tend to that-and

my lawyer will drive the tent pegs when I tell him to start in on the job." He gave them an address. "Now, get out of my way!" he snapped, and started off up the wharf.

Cap'n Sproul followed. They found their hats in the possession of the peanut-roaster man to whom Hiram gave money, with a few crisp remarks.

When they had gained one of the main streets, Hiram marching with the air of a man who had a definite destination and was in a hurry to get there, the cap'n ventured a remark.

"Be you goin' to pick up the rest of the attractions for your show on foot?"

Hiram turned on him with a look that was meant to be blistering.

"If so," the cap'n went on, "we'd better go somewhere, and get dry clothes. We ain't lookin' in no ways fit to represent a Sunday school."

"You listen to me," said his friend. "We're goin' to that livery stable, and we'll have clothes brought in whilst I'm settling for that team. And you pass out any more slurs, and you and me will have sudden and vi'lent trouble.

"I wasn't slurrin'," protested Cap'n Sproul, with suspicious meekness. "But that Peace and Good Cheer Society will be disappointed if you don't-

Hiram raised both clenched fists above his head, opened his mouth, and

was about to speak.

"Hold on!" pleaded the cap'n.
"Swearin' about a Sunday school is mighty bad business. It'll lower you a good deal in my estimation. Use a Sunday school respectfully. Of course I can see that you was plannin' a good show for 'em-one that would have uplifted, and all that! But the way things have turned out, why don't you drop 'em a line, and say that, owin' to rush of business, previous engagements, and so forth, they'll have to excuse you?"

Hiram felt the sting of the gentle sarcasm, but he could not find the lan-

guage he needed just then.

Cap'n Sproul knew that his suggestion had borne fruit when Hiram, seated at the desk in the livery-stable office, asked him whether "regret" was spelled with two t's in it.



CHAPTER I.

THE END OF THE WORLD.

N ORAH LASSELS sat waiting. It seemed years that she had waited. She began to feel that she knew this dingy room in a third-rate London hotel better than any other room in the world. By and by it grew, in her excited fancy, to be the whole world. There had never been anything else for her except this hideous brown room. There never would be anything else.

Sometimes for a minute she would forget that she was waiting for her adored twin brother, Patrick Lassels, to come and bring her news which meant more than life or death—at least, far more than her own life or death. But when she forgot the present, it was only to plunge back into the past, which swallowed her up like a black wave, and let her struggle out, choking for breath, thankful for the ugly brown room again.

Would Pat never come? Dear Pat, so bandsome, so brave, once so full of

fun and so joyously careless of the future!

She dreaded, yet longed beyond all things, to see him. And he had promised to come the moment he had anything to tell. His quarters were not far away—the barracks of the Grenadier Guards. That was why she had taken a room in this hotel, so that she might be near at hand; and, besides, as it was in a mean street in Westminster—out of the gay, beautiful London which was the only London she had known—there was little danger that she would be recognized there and gossiped about—or Pat, when he came to see her.

The dreadful thing had got into the papers—first the French papers, then the English ones—and the sensational halfpenny dailies had made the most of it, while pretending a discreet reticence and respect for families in high places closely concerned in the affair. Pat, therefore, was sensitive and self-conscious, hating to be looked at, as if every human being who glanced his way must know the disgraceful story that had been invented about the duel,

and how his uncle, Lord Grayminster, had turned against him on account of it.

As for Norah, she did not care whether people looked at her or not. She did not matter at all. Nothing

mattered but her brother.

A newspaper lay on the table now, given her by the old Irish waiter who had brought her breakfast. might like to throw an eve on it, miss,' he had said, overflowing with kindness, because her Celtic eves told him what green island had been the home of her ancestors. She had wondered a little if the queer old fellow could possibly guess who she and Pat were, although she had given the name of Gray, and her twin brother was "Mr. Gray when he came to see her. But she had not opened the paper. If there were anything there about herself and Pat, or, still worse, about Constantine Prevali, she did not want to read it. Since that horrible interview Constantine Prevali had given the special correspondent of The Daily Messenger in Paris, the very thought of a newspaper had made her heart beat fast,

"Cruel, wicked man!" she said to herself, as his image came up before her; dark, and very Greek, though he and his had called themselves Englishmen for two or three generations. She knew, or believed she knew, that Prevali had lied about Pat to revenge himself upon her. He had guessed that the surest way to hurt her was through her brother! And then the question that would continually ask itself in her mind seemed to scream in her ears: "Does Pat know what happened? Did he insult Constantine Prevali because he found out, or is it really true that they quarreled over a game of bridge?"

As the suspense grew almost unbearable the girl walked about the room, straightening a framed lithograph of some royalty hanging crookedly on the wall, or going to the one window and staring down at the mean street. It was not a great thoroughfare, but jingling hansoms, luggage-loaded four-wheelers, and flashing taxicabs swept along in a constant tide; and it struck her as astonishing that so many

people should be comfortably going about their business or amusements under her very eyes, while she and Pat had come to the end of the world.

That was what he had called it in his first passionate outburst, after the newspaper article which had roused the storm, and his interview with Lord Grayminster, who refused to believe his word. "The end of the world!" And of course it would seem like that to them both if Pat must leave the armyleave, not of his own accord, but because the king "no longer required his services." That was what would happen. Pat said. He would receive such a communication; and when she tried to cheer him up by saying that the war office was surely too wise to throw away a young officer whose life was in his profession, he only laughed—a dreadful, bitter laugh, so different from the young, jolly laughter natural to him, that Norah's heart almost broke in hearing it.

"It's Prevali's word against mine, and he's at death's door—through me," Pat had said. "Dying men are supposed to tell the truth; while—as for me—one can't help seeing that I've

every incentive to lie."

Often Norah glanced at the braceletwatch she wore on her wrist, and it seemed that something must have gone wrong, the hands moved so slowly. Pat must know by this time. Then why didn't he come? She asked herself this question with a miserable, helpless impatience; but suddenly an answer flashed into her mind which drove the blood back upon her heart.

"What if he never comes at all? What if he's driven mad with the injustice of his punishment, and kills

himself?"

The thought sent her flying to the door, wild to do something—anything rather than wait longer. She threw the door open, with some vague idea of sending a messenger or a telegram, and almost ran into her brother's arms, as he came heavily upstairs.

His step would have told her that the worst had happened, even if she had not seen it in his face. Not that he showed despair in his expression. These Lassels were not of the sort who hoist distress signals; and a stranger might only have thought that here was a handsome young man who had rather a haggard air of having burned the candle at both ends. But Norah knew.

"Oh, Pat, I am thankful to see you!" she stammered, as she retreated into the ugly brown room, he following. "I -I thought-I hardly know what I thought. But I've been expecting you so long! You didn't come, and I was

afraid-

"You needn't have been afraid of that, old girl," said Pat, guessing instantly what was in her mind, in the mysterious way which twins often have with one another. "I'm a lot of bad things, but not a coward, I hope. And I've given you enough to bear already. I wouldn't add that-or I'd deserve all I've got.

"Then-then it's bad news?" she faltered, though she knew without asking. "You can hardly call it news, Noll,"

"It was a foregone he answered. conclusion.'

"What a fiendish world!" she ex-

claimed passionately.
"Not a bit of it," said Pat-handsome Pat, for whom she would have died in torture if she could have saved him this. And the most horrible part, perhaps, was that it might be in trying to save him she had brought about his She thought of this, but could ruin. not put it in words. It was the secret which stood between them. Each had half the secret. She had hers. He had his. And it seemed to her now that, as these awful weeks had gone by without an understanding, they would never be able to open their hearts to one another. But she meant to try again today—perhaps this very hour.

"They couldn't do anything else in the circumstances," he went on, with a kind of hard cheerfulness. "Sneaking across the Channel and fighting a duel would hardly be considered conduct becoming an officer and a gentleman. Add to that the kind of duel I was fool enough to consent to; and on top of

all, Prevali's story—

"But they oughtn't to believe it!" Norah broke in. "How can anybody believe—anybody, whether they know you or not-that Pat Lassels would run a man through the body when he was disarmed and asking for his life?'

"I said, when a man's dying his word is taken. I deserve this, I suppose, for being drawn into such a hole-and-corner affair, with no seconds, no witnesses. I ought to have known he meant playing a trick of some kindeither killing me if he could, or accusing me of treachery if I got the better of him. But he made me furious, hinting I was afraid to trust myself alone with him. It all comes of my Irish temper and foolhardiness, but it's too late to be wise now. I must take my medicine."

"Uncle Edward could have saved you if he'd chosen to use his influence, Norah said. "I can't help hating him."

"He doesn't think I'm worth saving. You know it isn't the first time I've

kicked over the traces.'

"What are a few debts?" exclaimed Norah indignantly. "He was very pleased you should be in the Grenadier Guards. What could be expect? You're young and popular, and you have a position to keep up.

Pat Lassels laughed. "A position! Son of an impecunious Irish baron, and not a penny to bless himself with!"

"But you'll be a baron yourself when Conron dies."

"Poor old Conron!" said Pat sadly. "I never wished him dead, and less than ever do I wish it now. His death can do me no good after what's happened to me, and will only rake up this story -which I hope to goodness may be an

old one by that time."

Norah was silent. Their half-brother, Lord Conron, twenty years older than they, had broken his back in the hunting field when they were children, and nowadays was not only a hopeless paralytic, but had lost his mind and was in a sanatorium. When their fa-ther had died of grief after the wreck of his small fortune in the days of the great South African boom, the Earl of Grayminster, the twins' uncle on their mother's side, had somewhat reluctantly undertaken their bringing up. He had been too proud to leave his dead sister's children unfriended, but he was a cold man, and a mean man. What he gave, he grudged, and he had never understood Pat, to whom he doled out the

smallest possible allowance.

Norah had none, and her few bills were grumbled at, though she was expected to dress well, and had played hostess for her uncle in town and country, on the occasions when he chose to entertain, ever since she had said goodby to her last governess, at eighteen. Now, she and Pat were twenty-four. She was not able to call up much gratitude for Lord Grayminster, and she had always half guiltily looked forward to the day when Pat would be Lord Conron, and have the few hundreds a year squeezed out of such Irish land as was left-money which at present kept the invalid in luxury in his sanatorium,

A pang of despair shot through her heart at Pat's words, but she had to acknowledge that they were true. Out of the army, out of the country, perhaps forgotten by his friends, the title when it came would be of no use.

"Oh, Pat!" she exclaimed suddenly. "Tell me—for pity's sake tell me, why you fought that duel with Constantine

Prevali?

Pat turned his eyes on her, surprised at first, then very grave, and curiously secretive for one so frank. He had Irish eyes, blue as sapphires, between thick lines of black lashes; and though his skin would have been fair if sunburn had given it a chance, his short wavy hair was dark brown. Only in strong sunshine it showed red high lights, like a burnished helmet.

Norah had the same coloring, and looked as much like her twin brother as it is possible for a rather small, very feminine girl to look like a tall, strongfeatured young man. She was so slender, so pale now, and wistful-eyed, that she appeared much younger than she was, hardly more than nineteen, while Pat, brown and thin, and six feet in height, seemed older than his twentyfour years. In the last few weeks all

the boyishness had gone from his face and manner, so that now, when he looked down at his sister after her question, his sternness and sadness frightened her, as if he were her judge, not the darling, happy-go-lucky twin brother who had always been her other self.

"You know very well why we fought," he said at last slowly.

"I know what you told me-what everybody thinks. But-but do men fight nowadays over cards? Do they take the trouble to cross to France and try to kill each other just because-because one doesn't like the way the other

plays bridge?"

"Human nature's about the same that it always was," said Pat, with the same air of reserve which seemed to put a barrier between them. "When a man insults you, it isn't much trouble to cross the Channel if you don't want to get mixed up with the law of your own

"Still, I can't help thinking that—that—" Norah faltered.

"Don't think any more about it at all. It does no good, only harm-to us both."

"Think!" she broke out desperately. "I think every minute, day and night. It's never out of my mind for a second.

If that man dies, I-

"You have nothing to do with it," her brother answered almost coldly. "And if you must think about the thing, think only what Uncle Edward and everybody else who knows you and me, thinks now, and will always think.

It seemed to Norah that Pat laid careful emphasis upon that word "always"; but, when she glanced up at him searchingly, his eyes were turned

away.

Tears sprang to hers.

"I can't bear it, Pat," she sobbed, in a choked voice. "How can we go on like this-you and I? If there's a secret-you might tell me. I-there are things that are hard to say, but if there

is something, and we could talk—"
"We can't," Pat cut in sharply. "Let it alone, Noll. Don't make things worse for me. I've got about all I can

do with comfortably.

"Forgive me, dear," the girl whispered, winking away her tears with her long eyelashes. "I won't say any more."

Perhaps he was right. There was a thing which she could not tell him, for his own sake—unless, somehow, he drew it out, as she had hoped he might. In that way the truth might have been known without painful explanations. But if Pat had a secret, and she was forced to keep hers, she must just bear it—perhaps as long as she lived. "As long as I live," she repeated to herself. "Why, how odd I've got to go on living, though this is the end of the world!

"What will become of us both?" she asked aloud. "Can't we go away together, to Ireland perhaps, and live—live things down together? I've got heaps of money from selling the pearls—the pearls poor little mother left for me, you know. I was sure she'd think it right for me to sell them, because it's partly for you. And I've sold the diamond tiara, too—I should never have worn it. So we're quite rich. I——"

"You oughtn't to have done that, Noll," Pat interrupted, "I wouldn't have let you, if——"

"Oh, that's why I didn't tell you beforehand. But I wanted money so much, in case things went wrong, and you were sure they would, so I didn't I'm glad I didn't, now! Of course Uncle Edward was furious when I would come up to town to be near you, instead of hiding myself with him in Warwickshire, and naturally I couldn't expect a penny from him. I'd only enough to pay my fare here, and perhaps a day's board at this wretched place, where I can hide far more easily than at Gray Court. So the first thing I did was to go to Bond Street and bargain-oh, I did bargain, I can tell you!-though, really, the people were quite good, and perfectly honest, of They gave me five hundred Just think of it, Pat—five course. pounds. hundred pounds-the one bright spot in the dark. We can live on it for years, can't we, in some little out-of-the-way place, where we could take a cottage, and I could do the cooking?

wouldn't need any servants, and I'd

make my own clothes. Don't you think
—" But Pat's face made her break
off in discouragement. "Why wouldn't
it work?" she asked desperately.

"Do you suppose for a moment, my dear child, that I'd live anywhere on

your poor little money?"

"Why not? It's yours as much as Well, then, we might go to America-for I know you'll hate England if—if you're out of the army, my darling. You could find something to do there-oh, lots of things. You could be an army coach, or a riding master; or teach fencing, you're so splendid at that-" She stopped suddenly, seeing his face change. That last suggestion had been unfortunate. It opened a wound not healed yet, a wound which could never heal, if a man now lying in France should die. "I'm sure I could get an engagement as a governess," she hurried on. Then, seeing no answering light in her brother's eyes, she said humbly: "But perhaps you have some other plan?"

He did not answer for a moment. Then he said, with that new gravity of his, which made him seem older than

she:

"Yes, I have a plan. I've been thinking it over for days—ever since it came into my head, the night I was sure Uncle Edward didn't mean to speak a good word for me, and that my career was finished. It means our parting, Noll, but that's the best thing that could happen to you. Uncle Edward's fond of you in his queer, frozen way. You're useful to him, too. When he's rid of me things will right themselves between you. Not that you'll forget me. Rather not. I should hate to think you could; and I'll remind you of my existence by writing no end of letters."

Norah had grown very pale.

"Letters from-where?" she asked

quietly.

"From Southern Algeria, I hope. That's what I mean to try for. It's out now. My plan's to enlist in the Foreign Legion. At least I'd have adventure, plenty of life and action to help me forget. And I was born a soldier, Noll. A soldier I must be, or rust.

Since my own country doesn't want me, another will take me gladly enough, I know, and ask no 'questions. They never do ask any in the Foreign Legion, I've heard fellows say who know. If you're young and strong it's all they care about. You may be a thief or a murderer, and, if you choose to call yourself Smith or Jones, they won't bother to try and find out if you're really Brown. Oh, it's an opportunity cut out for me, and I've made up my mind to take it as soon as I can."

All her life Norah Lassels had tried to make it a rule never to urge her brother not to do things he wanted to do, or to do things he wanted not to do. But now, with her whole soul she yearned to persuade Pat into giving up

this plan of his.

"I don't know much about the Foreign Legion," she said heavily, "except that it's French, and that it's stationed in different parts of Africa. But I've read stories—and they make it seem as if the life were awful—not life at all, but a kind of living death. If they accept thieves and murderers you'd have to associate with them—"

"If Prevali dies, that's what Uncle Edward and lots of other good people

will call me—a murderer.'

"Oh, don't—don't speak like that. You wouldn't be. You only defended yourself. And maybe he won't die."

"In some ways it will be better if he does. And—I can't regret what I did. It seems to me still it was the only

thing,'

Pat was speaking to himself more than to her; and again the shadow of the secret rose between them. He saw it, and pushed it away, changing the

subject quickly.

"Don't be afraid of any such thing. Already I've been informing myself what to do. Southern Algeria is the place I want to get to. The desert has always fascinated me in books—and it's healthy enough there. I believe if you're a desirable sort of person, whom they think likely to make a good soldier, they humor you a bit in the beginning, before they're quite sure of you, and let you take your choice where to go.

Besides, I shan't have the hardships and humiliations some fellows go through. Uncle Edward has offered to pay up my debts once for all if I'll get out of his sight and never come back to trouble his virtuous and important existence. He even volunteered, in his astonishing generosity, to give me enough money for a third-class ticket to America. Splendid of him, wasn't it? Well, I didn't accept that offer, though I did the first, for the tradespeople's sake. Rather hard on them to let my pride do them out of their money! I've told him I'd go-somewhere. The rest is my business, not his. And I'm like you. I've two or three things I can sell. Don't look so sick, child! Roughing it a little will do me good, and take my mind off myself. Then, there's a place called Bel Abbès, the great recruiting town of Africa for the Foreign Legion. I've been reading about it; seems to be somewhere between Algiers and Biskra. I'll turn up there and offer my services to France. As soon as everything's settled, and I know what's going to become of me, I'll write to you."

"Yes, you'll write at once, and let me know where you're to be," Norah said, in the quiet tone which rather worried him. For he knew the girl too well not to be sure of the storm in her heart.

"You're a thoroughbred, dear," he said gratefully. "I was sure you'd see

me through.'

"Thank you, boy," she answered. "Yes. That's what I'm going to do. I'm going to see you through, what-

ever happens.'

He held out his arms, and she threw herself into them. Neither spoke for a little while, but the silence of each comforted the other. And Norah did not think it necessary to mention that her way of "seeing him through" was not to be exactly his way.

CHAPTER II.

Norah Lassels let her brother leave England supposing that she meant to gather up the dropped threads of her life again, and go on weaving the old



"Why, that's what men are for, to do what they can for women," smiled the American.

pattern. He had enough to trouble him without worrying about her, she reminded herself, when she was tempted to speak out what was in her heart for the future. All she told him at last was that she could not go back to Lord Grayminster's house.

"Î wouldn't say anything to bother you before, but now I must, on account of letters," she confesesd, as they were bidding each other good-by at the railway station, two lonely young people in a crowd who passed them by unnoticed. "Uncle Edward forbade me to come and be with you in town, and when I would he said I'd forfeited my right to a home with him. 'Under his roof' were the words he used. So like him! Can't you hear his voice, and see how his eyes looked? Very likely if I

begged and crawled, he'd deign to reconsider. Probably he'd say, 'I will forgive, though I can never forget.' That would be like him, too. One always knows he'll be stereotyped, whatever happens."

"Yes; potted phrases." Pat smiled grimly. "He invariably has one on a shelf, ready to hand."

"But I don't want his thin old forgiveness!" went on Norah. "I should know just what it meant: that, as you told me, I was useful to him in a way. So I've made up my mind to live with dear old Pobble. You'll be peaceful in your mind about me there, won't you?"

"Yes," Pat answered. For "Pobble" was Miss Pobblethwaite, Norah's last and best-loved governess, who had adored sister and brother, and been

adored by them. She had left her beloved pupil only because Lord Grayminster had decided that it was a useless expense keeping on a governess

after a girl was eighteen.

"There's just one more thing," said Norah. "You've told me that you mean to take another name. Have you made up your mind what it's to be? I wish you would, without waiting, because whatever it is I want to take it, too."

"I see," Pat answered. "No, I hadn't made up my mind. I hadn't thought about it. My idea was to give any name that flitted through my mind when the time came. You're sure you are willing to sacrifice any little kudos you may have through being the Honorable Norah Lassels?"

"Sure," she returned heartily.
"Thank goodness, we're neither of us snobs, whatever else we may be that's stupid. I want to be your sister, and nothing else. So if you're Patrick Smith. I'm Norah Smith."

Pat laughed. "Choose our name for us. Something a little more interesting

than Smith."

Norah thought a moment.

"Luck," she said. "It may bring us some, who knows?"

"Heaven knows we need it!" he mumbled. "All right. Luck it is. I wonder how they'll pronounce it in the

Foreign Legion?"

Then they said good-by, and Norah kept back her tears, though it seemed that her heart was breaking. Pat was gone from her, forever it might be swallowed up in the great dark sea of their common misfortune. And Norah went, as she had planned, to live with Miss Pobblethwaite, who was delighted to have her. But the kind old maid would have been still more delighted if Norah had not warned her that the visit would be short.

"Pat doesn't know," the girl explained. "It would only have worried him horribly; but as soon as I hear where he's likely to be, I'm going to live as near as possible to him. He shan't hear anything about it till I'm there. Then I'll wire him, and you can be

sending me on letters which may be arriving while I'm on my journey."

"How could you live in any such outlandish country?" Miss Pobblethwaite wailed. "A girl, alone, with hardly any

money?"

"I wouldn't be alone. I'd get something to do," Norah said. "Algiers, for instance, can't be so very outlandish. I'm sure I could find work of some sort there. Meantime, while I was looking about, I'd have enough to live on economically; and I'd have the comfort of knowing that if anything happened to Pat I wouldn't be almost at

the other end of the world."

By and by Pat's first letter came to Rose Bank. A blurred postmark, which seemed outlandish to Pobble, was on the envelope, but inside the address was clear. Pat had carried out the plan he had unfolded to his sister, the day when he first broke the news to her of what he meant to do. So far there had been no hitch. He was at Sidi Bel Abbès, the great recruiting station of Algeria for the Foreign Legion. He had been accepted without a question, except such official questions as could be answered as he pleased. He was now a Legionnaire, or rather a "bleu," as every new recruit was nicknamed by the old soldiers. His number was twentyeight thousand eight hundred and fiftyseven. It was printed on a card over his bunk in the big dormitory, together with the name of Patrick Luck, which was, by the way, a mere detail, and did not matter. Henceforth he would be known by his number. And Norah was not to be miserable about him. To be sure, accommodation was rather rough, and his new comrades were rougher, but there were two or three gentlemen in his company of the First Battalion of the Legion, and more than two or three characters who promised to be interesting. Everybody was more or less decent to him, and of course he was putting on no airs.

Altogether it was a cheerful lefter, but the girl read between the lines. And she had bought every book that she could find about the famous Foreign Legion. There were chapters in

those books so terrible that she grew sick and could hardly read to the end. For this very reason she was all the more anxious to go out to Algeria and be within reasonable distance of her

brother.

Through Miss Pobblethwaite, who knew some of the "cathedral set," a letter of introduction was got for Miss Norah Luck to the British consul at Algiers. It stated, on the authority of an archdeacon, who had been told the real story, that Miss Luck was an extremely well-connected and accomplished young person, suitable for the position of private secretary, companion, or governess for advanced pupils. She understood typewriting and shorthand-the girl had learned both at the instigation of Lord Grayminster, who saved a salary by employing her as an unpaid secretary; she spoke French fluently: German, Italian, and Spanish a little. Her musical ability was excellent. She was competent, if desired, to teach singing, the piano, the harp, and—a poor little frivolous accomplishment which the archdeacon hesitated to mention—the banjo. Also she was well grounded in Latin, had a little knowledge of Greek, and was a fair mathematician.

It did seem, with such a recommendation as this, that Miss Luck ought to find something to do; but, as the archdeacon felt bound to point out, it all depended upon the demand. Algiers, so far as its floating population was concerned, might be called a pleasure

place.

Miss Luck went to Algiers by ship, traveling second-class, not only to save money, which was a great object, but because Pat had traveled second-class; and, even if she could have afforded it, she would have refused any luxury that

he had not had.

If she had been happier, the wonderful white jewel of a town, set in green jade, would have thrilled her with its beauty at first sight. The very smell of it was the smell of the East, though it was but Eastern because Arabia had come to it, and long ago made it as Arabian as some fabulous place in the Thousand and One Nights. But she was too much preoccupied by her brother's affairs and her own to put her soul to appreciating the old, wild, pirate city, only half civilized by the

French.

Now that she was comparatively near him, she longed more than ever to see Pat; but she dared not let him know what she had done, until she could add to her confession a satisfactory statement of her circumstances. She wanted to be able to say: "I've got a nice, comfortable engagement, and am perfectly safe as well as a thousand times happier than I could be in England, with you in Algeria." Until she could say that, she preferred to let Pat believe her to be with Pobble at Rose Bank.

The consul was kind, but not optimistic. He was afraid that Miss Luck might have difficulty in finding any sort of an engagement. Of course he would do his best, mentioning her to people and all that. Also, she had better advertise at once, and, if she got replies, she could come and show them to him. So Norah advertised in a French and an English paper published in the

town.

One morning, after a night spent less in dreaming than in wondering what to do for the best, there was a letter for Miss Norah Luck, an answer to her advertisement. A French gentleman, Monsieur Duprez, a playwright, who wished to put one of his own plays into English, needed a secretary, and would be glad if Miss Luck could call between ten and eleven in the morning at the Villa Saida, Rue Sidi Abderrahman. If she were able to fill his requirements she would receive a generous salary, which could be discussed between them.

Norah was enchanted. She thought it delightful to be secretary to a playwright; and, as it was already late, she was tempted to call at once at the Villa Saïda, instead of asking the consul's advice, as he had suggested. She even started toward the Rue Sidi Abderrahman, to which the concierge directed her, but something made her turn. It was as if a hand touched her sleeve,

and a voice whispered: "It will make a difference in your whole life if you call on the consul with that letter."

She turned back, and went to the consulate, only to find that office hours had not yet begun. But she was not alone in her mistake. A man had arrived the moment before her, and, seeing that she was hesitating whether to go away or wait, he spoke:

"The consul will certainly be here in four or five minutes. I have an ap-

pointment with him."

The voice was American, a pleasant American voice from one of the Southern States. Norah glanced up and met the man's eyes. They were dark, and twinkled good-naturedly. She thought that he must be about thirty-six; and that seemed rather old to her. Also she thought that he looked extremely clever, as if he would know all about everything in the world, and exactly what to do in an emergency; and, though his clothes were good and well made, he had the air of not caring what he wore.

"Thank you," she said, "I'd like to wait, but—but I'm in a hurry. I have an engagement a long way off, and I'm

afraid of missing it."

"Well, I'd chance it and wait, if you'll allow me to advise you," said the American. "Young ladies don't, as a rule, call on consuls before ten o'clock in the morning unless it's something important."

"It is important to me, though not to him," Norah admitted, because somehow one couldn't help talking to this stranger as if one knew him. He was not particularly good-looking, nevertheless it occurred to the girl that he had one of the nicest faces she had ever seen. "I want to ask his advice," she went on, laughing a little. "I suppose only about a hundred other people want the same thing every day."

"Why, that's what men are for, to do what they can for women," smiled the American. He was almost handsome when he smiled, he had such nice white teeth, and such a good mouth, with no mustache to hide it. "Espe-

cially consuls," he added.

"Well, if he doesn't come, I must do without the advice, anyway," Norsh said, with an impatient sigh. "I may lose an engagement by waiting only a few minutes longer, because there are probably others who want it. And I don't know the street. If I get lost trying to find my way—"

"If you're in a hurry, perhaps you'd be kind enough to allow my chauffeur to drive you where you want to go, while I'm here doing my business with the consul, who is an old acquaintance of mine," suggested the American. "You can just as well have my man as not, because he'd only be kicking his heels waiting here for me. Now, please don't refuse. I see by your face that's what you're thinking of doing, and it will hurt my feelings if you do it."

"I—I couldn't—I really couldn't trouble——" stammered the girl, who was still very ignorant of life, when it must be lived alone. She hardly knew how to take such an attention from a stranger whom she had never seen five

minutes ago.

"It's pretty hard to trouble an American," he laughed. "You see, I want you to have time to wait and talk to the consul. If a girl needs advice, I guess she ought to have it."

"Very well, I will wait, and I will accept your kindness," said Norah impulsively. "That is—if he comes soon. But something may have happened to

detain him."

"I hope not," replied the American. But the minutes passed on, and the con-

sul did not appear.

"I must go!" the girl exclaimed. "Even if you lend me your motor; for I can't afford——" She stopped abruptly. She must not blurt out all her private worries to this good-natured stranger.

"Well, that's too bad," he said, in his nice Southern tones, which were slow, yet somehow not lazy. He was not smiling now. His face looked very grave indeed. "I'm just delighted to lend you the auto. But—I wonder if you'd think me impertinent and interfering if I asked you one question? Honor bright, I don't mean to be."

"I'm sure you could not be either," returned Norah. "What would you like to ask me?"

"It's kind of hard to explain, now I begin to try," said the American. "But—do you believe in instinct?"

It was strange that he should put that question.

"Yes, I do," she answered.

"Well, so do I. And my instinct is saying to me something like this: Here's a young lady who wants to take an important step, and she feels she ought to ask the advice of a man she can trust, before she takes it. Another thing it's saying is: That the young lady oughtn't to go off all alone and perhaps do something she'd regret, without having the advice to rely on. Now, I'm not a consul, and the young lady hasn't known me more than a quarter of an hour. But I am a man, and I'm a good deal older and more experienced than she. So now you know what my question was: Will you ask my advice, as a sort of understudy of the consul-that is, of course, unless it's a private affair you can only speak about to a friend?"

"It isn't a secret at all," said Norah, smiling, and feeling her heart warm with gratitude to the unconventional stranger. "And the consul isn't my friend. I've only met him once on a letter of introduction. But he said, if I got any answers to an advertisement I put in the papers, I might come and speak to him. It was an advertisement for work, and now I've received what sounds like a good offer—if I can suit. That's all. And I don't suppose you live in Algiers, do you, or know much about the French people here?"

"I spend some time in Africa every year," he said, "often making Algiers a center while I do some running about in my motor. Most likely you never heard my name; but those who are interested in moldering old Roman ruins and various other antiquities have generally heard it. It's Paul Winthrop. And though I come to Algeria and Tunisia to see things and dig up things, not people, I know something about them, too. Have you got a letter from

the person who wants to employ you, and would you let me see it?"

Without a word, Norah handed him the letter, and in silence he read it. When he finished, he said, "H'm!" and nothing more, staring at the paper.

"You don't think I ought to go?"

ventured Norah shyly.

"I think you mustn't go—not alone, anyhow," the American answered. "Here comes the consul now. He'll send some one to interview this French gentleman who wants a secretary."

A moment later Mr. Paul Winthrop was being properly introduced to Miss Luck. The consul was rather nonplused at the suggestion which was made to him. Doubtless it would be imprudent for Miss Luck to go alone to the Villa Saïda, but unfortunately he was late—had been detained, and had an exceptionally busy morning before him, otherwise he would be delighted to accompany her himself. As it was, if Miss Luck could wait—

"She doesn't want to wait for fear the place may be worth having, and it may be snapped out of her mouth by somebody else," Mr. Winthrop explained hastily. "But see here. Am I the sort of person you could recommend to help Miss Luck out in this little business? Can you vouch for me to her, I mean?"

The consul laughed. "If I had a million pounds, and twenty daughters or sisters, I'd trust them to you," he replied.

"That's all right, then," exclaimed Winthrop joyously. "Then I'll go with Miss Luck if she'll have me. And we'll not waste any more of her time."

Almost before Norah knew what had happened she found herself spinning through the shady streets of the French part of Algiers, in the motor car of a man whom she had never seen half an hour ago. And the man himself was beside her in the car.

The Villa Saïda was discovered, after some inquiries, in the direction of Mustapha Superieure. It was new, and large, and built according to some tasteless Frenchman's idea of the Arab style.

Monsieur Duprez was expecting a

lady, and would receive her in his private sitting room, said the Algerian-French manservant. But the gentleman? He was not expected, perhaps? Would he like to wait for mademoiselle in the salon?

No, Mr. Winthrop returned in very good French, he would accompany mademoiselle. He was her agent, and would send his card to Monsieur

Duprez.

The servant was embarrassed. His instructions had been to bring Miss Luck, if she called, at once to the sitting room of Monsieur Duprez; but her companion suggested some hitch in the program, and it seemed tactful to let both wait in the public salon while the situation was hastily explained to Mon-

sieur Duprez.

Winthrop did not sit down, but walked about, ostensibly looking at the gaudy, imitation Arab decorations, and upon his face was a curious expression. Privately he thought it not improbable that his visiting card might make a sudden and complete change in the arrangements of the French playwright, and already he was hastily planning for Miss Luck's future benefit. Perhaps he thought Monsieur Duprez would go so far as to send word that Miss Luck had come too late; that he had engaged another secretary, and that it was unnecessary to see her at all. But at the end of five minutes the door opened, and a dark, small, somewhat Jewishlooking man stepped briskly into the room.

The newcomer, who had black eyes as bright as a rat's, deep set on either side of a large nose, fastened his look with extraordinary keenness and interest on Norah. It struck Winthrop, who was watching him closely, that this look of the Frenchman's had more in it than curiosity, or even admiration of a pretty girl. There was, or seemed to be, no suggestion in it of the elderly philanderer who had hoped for an agreeable flirtation with his secretary. It was almost as if he recognized, and was excitedly glad to recognize, a face he had expected to see. But, glancing quickly at Miss Luck, Winthrop assured himself that she had never seen the man before.

Monsieur Duprez was extremely polite. He did not let himself show any annoyance at the presence of Miss Luck's "agent," if he felt it. Indeed, he addressed himself mostly to Mistaire Winthrop, in English that was correct, if stilted. He needed an English secretary, and had been delighted to see Miss Luck's advertisement. It seemed that she would be exactly the person for whom he was looking. He would consider himself fortunate to secure her services if she had any skill with the typewriter; and, as his English was not quite all he desired, she could be of assistance if he hit upon the wrong word. Would Mees Luck and Mistaire Winthrop go with him to his own sitting room, where mademoiselle could try his typing machine? hoped it was of the make to which she was accustomed. If not, another might be obtained.

Altogether, there was nothing to find fault with in the manner of Monsieur Duprez. And in his sitting room was a table littered with the manuscripts of a play in French. Winthrop had to admit that the man appeared to be genuine, and began to be afraid that he could find no reason for advising Miss Luck not to accept the situation of

secretary.

While she showed Monsieur Duprez a sample of her work, sitting at the typewriter, looking very pretty and graceful as she tapped the keys, Winthrop took up a sheet of the manuscript. He knew that this was not "good form," but in the circumstances he did not care. He wanted to see that play of Monsieur Duprez's, and he wanted to see what Monsieur Duprez would do if he looked at it.

Though the Frenchman was bending over Miss Luck, he saw instantly what the American was doing. One of his lightning glances told him, though he did not move his head. Then slowly he turned, as if to take up a leaf of the scattered manuscript and give it to the girl. He allowed himself to see that her "agent" was reading his play. Po-

litely, even good-naturedly, he shrugged

his shoulders.

"Oh, monsieur, I beg your pardon," he said in French. "I am desolated, but really I fear that I must beg of you not to read my poor work. It is a foolish fad, no doubt, but I am superstitious about having strangers see a line of my manuscript before it is completed. For mademoiselle it is different, of course, for she is, I hope, to be my assistant. I am climbing the ladder, so I have my fears and fancies. You will pardon them, and put down that paper, I am sure."

Winthrop put it down instantly, apologizing for his thoughtlessness. And as Monsieur Duprez explained his little superstition, Winthrop's eyes had been busy. In one long, sweeping glance, he had taken in almost every word on the small page. A dramatic situation was in process of development, and about that situation there seemed something

oddly familiar.

Was Monsieur Duprez a plagiarist? Or had he begun copying out an old melodrama—so old that a young girl was unlikely to have seen, or heard

of it?

If the second supposition were true, what did it mean? Winthrop said to himself that the explanation might be very sinister indeed—and very subtle. "The man is like a detective," he said

"The man is like a detective," he said to himself. "Yet why should a detective want to get a sweet, simple girl like

this into his clutches?"

"Miss Luck will suit me excellently, I can see," remarked the playwright. "I offer four hundred francs for a month's work, four hours a day only; two in the morning, two in the afternoon. And it may be for a longer time, at the same salary, for I shall probably write a new comedy while I am in Algiers—where I come for my health."

It was very good pay, and Norah was minded to accept instantly, but Winthrop broke in before she could

neak

"Miss Luck is my client," he said.
"She has commissioned me to look after her business interests, therefore she allows me to answer for her; and

my decision is this; that she must have till this evening to think over your offer. She had hoped for an engagement to last the whole season, and though it is desirable in some ways for——"

"I am sure it will be difficult to do better," the Frenchman interrupted, "if mademoiselle really wishes for work. And it may be that I can give her em-

ployment during the season."

"In that case it might be different," said Winthrop. "But in any case she will let you know this evening before eight."

Duprez flushed, and his eyes sparkled, though he controlled his features

and voice.

"But I have other applicants," he

objected.

"Miss Luck wouldn't wish you to lose a good chance through her," Winthrop drawled in his Southern voice. "You are free to engage some one else if you prefer."

Monsieur Duprez bit his lip; then

bowed submissively,

"Each one of us will send the other word," he said, as he escorted his guests downstairs, and saw them to the door, his eyes dwelling with curiosity on the motor car and smart chauffeur. He watched the automobile round the corner; then, running upstairs as lithely as a boy, he wrote out a long telegram in cipher.

"Oh, Mr. Winthrop, I must accept this offer!" exclaimed Norah, almost pleadingly, as if he really had a right

to help her decide.

"Do you like the man?" Winthrop asked.

"No-o. I don't think I do. Though he was polite and kind. He—he looks so like a rat. But what *does* it matter how he looks?"

Winthrop did not answer. He was thinking, and his eyebrows were drawn

together in a frown.

"How would you like to go to Tunis?" he asked suddenly. "And be a sort of governess to two young Arab girls—girls of good family, intelligent and charming, I imagine, though of course I haven't seen them. I know

the father slightly, however, and a cousin the elder girl's engaged to. You know—or maybe you don't know—that though Tunis is a great deal more Eastern and unspoiled than Algiers, curiously enough, the women there are making a move toward freedom, which isn't at all the case in Algiers. From what young Mahmoud Bel Hassan has told me about his people, I'm pretty sure you'd like his cousins, and the life

might amuse you. I could get the chance for you, I know, because Bel Hassan has told me that his uncle is looking for a French or English lady to talk languages with the girls and teach them European music. Will you let me telegraph to him in Tunis?"

"Why do you feel so strongly that I oughtn't to go to Monsieur Duprez?" Norah asked abruptly, looking straight up into Winthrop's eves

"It's difficult to explain," he said.
"I hardly k n o w m y self. But—I feel there's something underhand about the man—something snaky

and sly. If it weren't almost impossible, I should say he was a detective."

To the American's surprise, Miss Luck blushed so painfully that tears were forced to her eyes.

CHAPTER III.

THE PLAN AND THE LETTER.

Monsieur Duprez a detective! It would have been difficult to suggest an idea more alarming to Norah Lassels. Her mind flew to the secret which she had kept from Pat—the secret that perhaps he knew, and, knowing, held back one of his own from her.

Winthrop was startled by the effect of his words, and regretted them.

"I'm sorry if I've frightened you," he said. "I guess I was very stupid to put such a thought into your head. But that French play the fellow wanted you to translate for him, I don't believe it

was his own at all. I read a page, and I'll eat my hat if it wasn't a thing I saw in Americadone over from the French-when I was a boy. I believe it was old even then. I know it was called 'Forget-me-Not,' and was a great success. It must have been forgotten by the time you were born; but it made an impression on me. You saw how worried he was when I picked up a page? I bet he was afraid I might be old enough to recognize it. Now. if I am right about this thing, the question is, why should he engage a secretary at a good salary to translate ancient history like



The door opened, and a dark, small man stepped briskly into the room.

that, pretending it was a play he'd written?"

"Because—because," Norah stammered a little, "it would be easy to explain if—he were a detective."

"What on earth could a detective want with you?" Winthrop could not help blurting out.

Then he was sorry he had spoken. Miss Luck was answering him.

"There is a reason why one might have been sent to look for me, and

She stopped short, remembering herself in time. "Only it seems such a sensational thing, like people do in books. I shouldn't have thought it would have been worth his-worth any one's expense and trouble. Still-you may be right, and I'm very glad you warned me. I wouldn't go to Monsieur Duprez for anything now, if he offered me ten times the money, for fear he is what you say. And though I came out to Algiers for a special reason, and wanted to stay for awhile, you've made me feel that I'd like to go away now as soon as possible-but to a place not too distant. I'm afraid I'm stupid about the geography of this part of the world. Is-is Tunis far away from Sidi Bel Abbès?

again surprised. Winthrop was What interest could this English girlhe supposed her English-have in Bel

Abbès

He knew the place, not only because it was one of the most important recruiting stations of the French Colonial army, but because it was also important historically, and history was his hobby. He longed to ask her the question, yet could not. But Norah, grateful for his kindness, and not wishing to seem too mysterious, decided to explain a little, since she could see no reason why she should not.

"There is a person whom I care for very much in the Foreign Legion," she said rather shyly. "He's at Sidi Bel Abbès now, though he writes that he may leave there almost any time. came to Africa on account of him; at least, to be in the same country. now you can understand that I don't

want to be too far off."

For some strange reason or other Winthrop's heart went down. There was no reason whatever for this, in common sense; but from feeling decidedly happy, and a good deal excited, he suddenly lost interest in life. glorious Algerian sunlight looked cold and faded. He was taking Miss Luck back to the consulate, not to her hotel, as the consul had asked to hear the result of the interview with Duprez, and Winthrop had been boyish enough to

mumble in the chauffeur's ear on leaving the Villa Saïda: "Go the longest way round." Now he thought what a fool he had been. Winthrop saw down into his own mind, and knew that he was jealous of "the person" for whom Miss Luck confessed to "caring very much."

"Bel Abbès is farther from Tunis than from Algiers," he told her. "But if you cared to-would you-do you think you could see your friend if-

"Oh, no," Norah exclaimed. don't expect to see him. He doesn't even know yet that I'm in Africa. He mustn't know until I've found a safe refuge of some sort, and can write him about it. Then he won't have to worry."

Winthrop faintly was relieved. "Well, if you feel that you'd like to leave Algiers," he said, "I do honestly believe you couldn't do better than take this position I've been talking about. Shall I wire?"

Norah thought only for an instant, and said: "Yes. Thank you a thousand times-for that and for every-

thing!"

"Don't thank me till I deserve your thanks," he replied, "And even then, they'll be due, I'm sure, from Sidi Ferid El Khadra and his two beautiful daughters, for sending them a treasure."

Norah had to laugh at that. you've never seen them, how do you

know they're beautiful?"

"My friend, Mahmoud Bel Hassan, who is decidedly French, and modern in his ideas about his countrywomen, even his cousins, has told me that his fiancée and her sister, who are heiresses, are supposed to be the two most beautiful girls in Tunis and in all the country round. That's saying a good deal; for Arab girls, when they are pretty, are lovely; and the Tunisiennes are particularly celebrated for their beauty. suppose there's Greek blood in many of them. These two-your future pupils —are only sixteen and seventeen. The elder is the one engaged to the cousin, and young men cousins are often allowed to come and go in a family where there are girls, like brothers. been the case with Si Mahmoud, and

he's desperately in love with his Laïla. The other girl is called Ourïeda, which

means 'little rose.' "

Norah's spirits were improving, as Winthrop had hoped they would. But his own were still depressed, and he tried to believe that it was only because he was sorry that so charming a creature should throw away her love on a wild Legionnaire.

"There are three ways to get to Tunis," he said. "By rail from Algiers, or by ship, which is more interesting—and by motor. Of course, it's just on the cards, if I'm right about Duprez, that if you go by rail or sea, you may find him on the same train or the same

boat."

Norah grew pink and then pale. If Duprez were a detective it must mean that Constantine Prevali was not going to die. She was thankful for that; but it was terrifying to think that he might have paid some one to follow her here to Algiers, where she had taken another name, not dreaming that any one except Pobble was in the secret. frightened her to think that, if Duprez were employed by Prevali, a very elaborate plan had been made to bring her into association with him every day for weeks. She wondered if Duprez had meant to keep her under his eye, working for him, until Constantine Prevali were well enough to come out to Algiers. Instinctively she felt that this probably had been the idea, and again she seized thankfully at the thought of her escape. She owed it all to Mr. Winthrop, she reminded herself; and her heart warmed to him as it never had to a stranger, while he went on, almost timidly, suggesting that she might go to Tunis in his car.

"You'd be well chaperoned, of course," he hurried to explain. "The consul is an old acquaintance of mine, and his wife, too. Very likely she'd enjoy the trip, with a cousin who's staying with them now. If not, she'll know of some nice married woman who'll be glad of the chance of a little motor tour through interesting country. We'll fix it up this morning, and get off the first thing to-morrow. That way

Duprez can't know where you're going, even if he's spying around when you start."

Winthrop would not let Miss Luck walk back to her hotel when she was ready to leave the consulate. Her address had been given in the advertisement, an indiscretion which she regretted now, therefore she was not safe from Duprez if he chose to be intrusive.

"Don't see him if he calls on you this afternoon," the American advised. "He may make some plausible excuse, but don't be drawn. Keep him on tenter hooks as to whether you're going to engage with him or not, and at the last moment send a messenger to say you regret you're unable, and so on. Let the message be verbal. I wouldn't write him if I were you. He might use a letter or telegram in some way you wouldn't like."

Instantly Norah thought of a way in which she would not at all like a letter of hers to be used. Duprez might forward it to Constantine Prevali. And hastily she promised Winthrop to carry

out all his suggestions.

Duprez did call in the afternoon, sending his card with "urgent need to see you for a moment," written upon it in English, which the hotel servant who brought it up could not read. Her heart beating, in fear of she scarcely knew what, Norah answered that, unfortunately, she was not feeling able to leave her room, but would let Monsieur Duprez hear from her without fail that evening, when nothing more happened until a note came from Winthrop inclosing a telegram from Tunis.

Miss Luck's services were eagerly accepted. It was hoped she would arrive soon to take up her duties. And in his hurriedly written letter Winthrop told her that "it was all fixed up." The consul's wife and cousin would be her traveling companions in his car, and when they had seen Tunis would be sent back in it, for he himself was going to do some work at Carthage. Would Miss Luck be ready to start at half-past eight in the morning?

In the evening, just after she had dispatched her messenger to the Villa

Saïda, the post arrived. There was a fat envelope from England, addressed to Miss Luck, in Pobble's handwriting. Inside, folded up in a half sheet of paper, well scribbled over by Miss Pobblethwaite, was another envelope with an Algerian postmark ten days old.

Pat wrote to his dear little Noll at Rose Bank, to tell her that he was leaving immediately with the Eleventh Company of the First Battalion for the border of Morocco, where there had been a "little trouble that must be put down," unless it were all over by the time the Legion got there. "Thank Heaven. I may come in for some fighting!" said Pat, too excited over the prospect to remember that his girl twin might not rejoice with him.

Norah dropped the letter on her lap, and, covering her face with her hands,

cried bitterly.

"If he should be killed!" she sobbed.
"And I should never see him again! Everything I've done is all in vain—I've traveled—so far—so far! And I want him so much!"

She felt utterly forsaken and alone in the world. She would not even try to be brave, or glad that Pat might have

his wish.

Nevertheless, nothing was altered for her. She must go to Tunis now. And nobody could help her in this new trouble, not even Mr. Winthrop.

CHAPTER IV.

THE DAUGHTERS OF EL KHADRA.

A girl sat among cushions on a low, wide seat in the inner court or patio of a beautiful old house in Tunis.

It was a large and very beautiful patio, roofed only by the violet sky, though it was shaded by orange trees, which grew up out of flower beds, set at regular intervals round the fountain in the center of the green and rose-yellow-tiled terrace.

The walls of the patio were white, dazzling white as sunshine on snow; and all round it went a narrow gallery onto which the big door windows of the first story opened, the gallery floor, supported by delicately carved pillars, giv-

ing shade to seats let into the wall below, on the level of the terrace.

Beyond, nearer the entrance from the street, was another, larger patio, and on tiled seats there, slaves had sat in past days, waiting the orders of their master; but this inner, secret place even in times before slavery was out of date—only female servants and eunuchs were allowed to enter, for it was sacred to the ladies of the household.

An old Persian rug, faded to misty rainbow tints, was spread over the porcelain tiles of the seat where the girl was curled up; and the cushions which made it soft for her were of elaborately embroidered velvet and quaintly patterned brocade silk of violently contrasted colors, such as Arabs love.

She was an Arab girl, and because she was in her own home, where strangers could not intrude, she had no veil, and her arms and neck were bare. She wore a low-cut blouse of rose-colored gauze, with a little sleeveless jacket of dove-colored silk, and her wide trousers were of the same pale gray. The sash wound round her waist was violet, and so were the pearl-sewn velvet slippers on her little gray silk-stockinged feet.

The negress, whose sole duty in life it was to serve this girl and the younger half-sister, had been washing Laïla's hair, and it hung round her shoulders in a long, black, waveless veil. For a pure-blooded Arab she was fair, her skin being like old ivory faintly gilded, without a trace of color except in the lips, which were duskily pink, the tint known as old rose. Her eyebrows were very black, drawn low, and almost perfectly straight, in a delicate line above the long, wide-open dark eyes that had a topaz light in them.

This jeweled gleam, the black straightness of her brows, the slightly aquiline line of the pretty nose, and the fullness of the mouth gave a vague, curiously fascinating suggestion of cruelty to the beautiful young face, except when it smiled, and then it was altogether charming.

But Nouna, the Soudanese negress said sometimes in a whisper to her fel-

low servants: "Wait till our lovely golden eaglet is a little more fully fledged. Then, if ever she be thwarted in anything that touches her heart—beware! It will be the case of the fierce mother bird over again—thou wilt see!"

For the mother of Laïla had been of the far south, the daughter of a desert sheik, in the wild country of the Algerian dunes beyond Touggourt. When Sidi Ferid El Khadra had tired a little of her, and taken a second wife-which he could do, as neither he nor she was of princely blood, though he was rich and well born-an awful thing had happened. No one outside had ever known what the thing was, for these harem tragedies are well hidden, but all the old servants of the household knew. and talked furtively among themselves sometimes, wondering if Laila had ever come upon any vague inkling of the truth.

That Ourieda was absolutely ignorant, they were sure, for she was as light-hearted as a rosebud growing in the sun, except when she yearned for more freedom; but Laïla had hours of strange depression, when her eyes seemed clouded with mystery and she would not speak. Since she had been engaged to marry her cousin, Sidi Mahmoud Bel Hassan, she had been better; but even now she had the air of brooding over something which could only be felt, never spoken. Still, she appeared to love her sister, and Ourieda adored Laïla.

It was a French novel that the girl was reading, and once in a while she glanced up quickly, ready to hide the book if necessary, for her father's sister, Lella Aïssa, disapproved of French novels, and everything French. Since the tragedy, almost sixteen years ago now, which had engulfed two beautiful young women in a single wave of fate, Ferid El Khadra had never cared to take another wife, but had brought into the house his widowed sister, to be a mother to both daughters. He himself was "advanced" in many of his ideas. El Khadra spoke French as well as he spoke Arabic, and better than he spoke Turkish.

When the two girls were little, they had been escorted by Soudanese servants every day to a French school. which they had enjoyed beyond all things; and while they had attended they had been the envy of their small friends, daughters of old-fashioned parents who despised French ways. Despite this "enlightenment," however, when Laïla was twelve and Ourïeda eleven. thev had been promptly snatched away from school, and all the pleasant liberty enjoyed by Arab children of good birth. They were then to consider themselves no longer children, but young girls who would, in a very few years, be marriageable. They were given no more freedom except when at their father's country place, where they were generally taken for six or eight weeks in the summer. When they went out they were veiled, and in town were never allowed to walk. The blinds of their carriage when they drove were closed, save for tiny peepholes; and they were jealously, almost fiercely, guarded by Lella Aissa, their aunt, who was the very opposite of what modern "Frenchified" Tunisian women called "enlightened." Nevertheless their lovely, childish faces, once seen by rich and noble young Arabs of Tunis, had not been forgotten since they were hidden in their father's harem; and, somehow, the rumor ran that Laïla and Ourïeda, the two daughters of Sidi Ferid El Khadra, were the most beautiful girls in Tunis, as well as among the richest.

Suddenly, just as Laïla had got to the most exciting part of her French novel, there came a sound of rustling leaves, and she covered up the book with her long hair, which she pretended to begin plaiting. But then, down at her feet fell a full-blown rose, breaking into pieces as it struck the pink-and-green payement of the terrace.

Somebody laughed, and, looking up, Laïla saw hanging down over the carved and painted cedar balustrade of the gallery above, a billow of hair almost twice as long, and more than twice as beautiful, as her own. It, too, had just been washed, and being so

long and thick that it was hard to dry, a few drops of water were still dripping from the curly ends. A faint smell of roses came to Laïla, for Nouna always washed the sisters' hair with rose water, which she distilled herself.

"Ourïeda!" the elder girl cried. "Come down if thou art ready. I want

to talk to thee.

She spoke in Arabic, though Ourieda was fond of speaking French; and, according to Arab fashion, always said, "thee and thou," No Arab ever uses the word "you," even in addressing strangers or superiors.

"I, too, want to talk to thee," cried the girl above; and in another minute she appeared, having run down the marble steps which descended into the

patio from the floor above.

She was all in white and radiantly beautiful; so beautiful that beside her Laïla looked almost plain. Ourïeda's mother had been a Greek girl, and some who remembered said that the resemblance was extraordinary. But El Khadra, who remembered only too well, said nothing. Only he loved Ourieda with a great love, and was comparatively indifferent to Laïla.

Ourieda's wide trousers and thin blouse and tiny jacket were all white. Even her silk stockings and pearl-embroidered slippers were white, for she loved white better than any color, and would not be persuaded against it, although white is Arab mourning, and said to bring bad luck to a young girl.

Her skin was like a creamy rose, and her dark-brown hair, which hung down to her knees, had golden gleams on the tops of its waves. She had pink cheeks, and sweet, laughing lips of a prettier red than Laïla's, almost coral. Her eyes were extraordinarily large, with long, curled lashes, which almost touched her eyebrows when she looked up, and, though she smiled a great deal, like a child who has never known trouble, there was a fatal expression about her small, oval face sometimes, when she was thoughtful or absent-minded; an expression which only those people have to whom the great tragedies or great joys of life are to come.

"Aunt Aïssa has been in talking to me while Nouna dried my hair," said Ourieda, sitting down by her sister. "She is very angry that the sidi, our father, is going to let us have this English lady for our institutrice. She says that the English are even worse than the French, and that we are to mark her words, great evil will come of it."

"I know who will be disappointed if evil does not come," returned Laïla.

"Aunt Aïssa."

They both laughed, showing pretty little white teeth, as they looked into each other's eyes in appreciation of the small joke. Being young girls, not married women, they were not obliged, by Arab custom, to make up their faces, darken their eyes with kohl, or change the color of their hair with henna, so they were very fresh and charming to see, as they chatted together in low voices, and Laïla showed to Ourïeda the yellow cover of her novel.

"Thou seest," she said, "I am polishing up my French, that I may not disgrace myself with our English dame de compagnie."

"Oh, so that is the only reason thou readest a French novel! If this be true, do not risk a scolding from Aunt Aïssa if she finds it, but talk to me instead. I love to speak French, thou knowest."

Laïla drew her eyebrows slightly

together.

"Thou sayest that because it pleases our father. As for me, it is no use trying to please him especially, because I cannot. He does not care that I am not 'advanced' in my thoughts, that I am almost as old-fashioned as Aunt Aïssa. Arab ways and the Arab language are good enough for me. And I do not let my thoughts go far outside the harem. I love the wearing of the veil; for it seems to me that in it lies our greatest charm for men. It is the mystery surrounding us which makes them love and long for us as they do."

"If thou hast Ourieda laughed. found out that they love and long for us, it must be from French novels. Surely it is not Cousin Mahmoud who has put the idea into thy head, for he is more advanced than my father; and when thou art married to him, if thou persuadest hard enough, I believe thou canst even induce him to let thee live European fashion, without a veil—as I

should like to live."

"And as I would not like to live, at all events, in Tunis, or anywhere in Islam," answered Laïla sharply, "because all respectable people would cut me and Mahmoud, and we should be a public disgrace. But if thou wouldst truly like such a life, why didst thou not make Mahmoud fall in love with thee, Ourïeda, instead of with me, when he came back from Paris to find us no longer children? Surely thou must think thou couldst have taken him if thou hadst wished, since thou hast so much more gift of winning love than I have. Every one tells thee so."

Ourieda blushed, and looked distressed. "Please do not say such things, sister, though, of course, it is only to tease me. Mahmoud adores thee."

"Perhaps he does now," Laïla admitted. "I am talking of the first days. Oh, I know very well that I owe him to thee! My father, 'advanced' as he is, would not have consented to let him see us as he used to when we were children, if thou hadst not put forth all thy wiles and arts."

"I have none," said the younger girl.
"I love our father, and he loves me,

that is all."

"Yes, that is all," Laïla echoed bitterly. "Well, now I have some one to love me, too—for the first time in my life, even though it is only Mahmoud."

"Only Mahmoud!" repeated Ourieda. "He is the handsomest and cleverest young man in Tunis."

"Tunis is not the world."

"It is our world. Even I think that, though thou sayest that I am 'advanced,' and that thou art not. Is it thy French novels which make thee talk so? And why, if thou lovest the Arabs and not the French, dost thou read their romances and dream of their men, when thou art engaged to thy Cousin Mahmoud?"

"Mahmoud is French in most of his

ideas in these days."

"Yet thou speakest of him slightingly. Is it for that?"

"Oh, thou art a child, Ourieda! Thou knowest nothing of men or love—and nothing of life or even of thyself, or thy sister. Can a girl always give a reason for everything she feels, or says, or does?"

"No. But sometimes thou seemest strange to me—as if thou didst not care for me, though I love thee so much. I am glad that the English lady is coming—very glad. She will, perhaps, be kinder to me than thou art. And thou

hast always Mahmoud."

"Of course thou art glad. She is thy triumph. Didst thou not persuade the sidi to consent when Mahmoud came to say his American friend, Monsieur Winthrop, had telegraphed from Algiers?"

"It was but little to persuade our father, since he was pleased with the idea,

and thought it a good plan."

"Oh, thou madest him believe he thought so!"

"Dearest, do not quarrel," said Ourieda. "I am sad when thou art vexed with me, even when I cannot see that it

is my fault."

"Then let me go on reading my novel, and do thou get one of thine own, if thou choosest—or darest. I have come to a part when it is hard to stop. One woman is deadly jealous of another, and asks herself what she shall do. I know what I think she will do. But I want to make sure."

"What a disagreeable story!" ex-

claimed Ourieda.

Laïla gave her a sharp look. "Didst thou never hear any in real life as disagreeable?" she asked slowly.

The younger girl shook her head, looking up at the wheeling doves of the Mosque of Sidi-Mahrez. "No one ever told me any disagreeable stories," she said softly.

"I suppose not," the elder muttered; and went back to her book. But she was thinking of a story she had heard, which concerned them both; a story of jealousy.

Ourieda had no French novel to read,



"We were afraid thou wouldst be old and not pretty," said Ourieda.

even if she had cared for one. Nouna smuggled them into the house for Laïla, and the younger girl read them sometimes, more to keep up her French than anything else, for they made her rather sad. She was a very happy girl really, for every one was kind to her, and she loved her father dearly-her father, who was so austere with others that his affection for her was a great compliment. But she could not help the longing which these stories of European girls put into her head. She thought it must be wonderful to be treated by a man not only like an equal in intelligence, but even a superior being, to be bowed down to. The blind love of an Arab could never satisfy her. she was afraid—that love which made a mere doll of a wife, and loaded her with sweets and jewels.

CHAPTER V.

BEHIND THE WHITE WALL.

Winthrop's car took Norah and her chaperons eastward from Algiers, through Constantine with its stupendous and historic gorge; past strange Arab towns where French soldiers were the only Europeans to be seen; through mountain country and yellow desert duncs, until at last they came into Tunis,

At first sight Norah was disappointed. On the way she had heard her new friends saying that Tunis was far more picturesque, far more unspoiled and romantically Eastern than Algiers.

But coming into the outskirts, all seemed French. There were great modern-looking boulevards, with smart shops and huge open-fronted restau-

rants and cafés, full of Europeans. It was late afternoon when they arrived, Winthrop, who was driving, stopped the car in front of a big, white

hotel.

"We'll have tea here," he said, "and I'll send a note to Si Mahmoud. He knows we're due to get in to-day, and is prepared for a message at any time. Then we'll let his cousins know, and El Khadra's carriage will come and fetch you, Miss Luck. Motors can't go into the real Tunis-old Tunis-Arab Tunis, which you haven't seen yet. I only wish they could, for I don't like to let you out of my charge until the door of your new home opens to welcome you.'

Norah only smiled at him gratefully; for she did not dare to say how frightened she was now that the time had come for her to be swallowed up by that old, secret civilization which lived hidden from, though side by side with,

Europe, here in North Africa.

Already, during the long motor-car journey, she had begun to understand a little of what it would mean, and how completely isolated she was to be from any such life as she had ever known. Exactly what it would be like, she could hardly guess, though the consul's wife. who knew Arab ladies of high birth in Algiers, had told her some details. Anxious as she was about Pat, and longing for the moment when she might telegraph, and write that she was settled comparatively near him, she had enjoyed the motor tour through this strange and fascinating country, almost in spite of herself. The thought of parting from these pleasant people, who had been kind, made her heart sink; and worse than all-far worse than all —was it to part from Winthrop.

To fall in love with him or any other man was an idea utterly remote from the girl's mind. Consciously she cared for no man except for her twin brother Pat; but she had never before met any one like this tall Virginian, with his oddly mingling chivalry and whimsical sense of honor. Her whole acquaintance with Winthrop had been so strange and interesting, even romantic, and he

had been so good to her, saving her from a situation equivocal if not dangerous, that she could not help think-

ing about him a good deal.

As for Winthrop, he dared not say: "Poor little girl, sweet little girl, for Heaven's sake give this all up, and marry me instead. I can't stand it to let you go out of my life. I thought I should feel like that even before we started. But after the days we've had together I'm sure of it. Let me make you happy. I love you.'

He dared not say this because of the man in the Foreign Legion whom she loved, and for whose sake she had left England. She had spoken stammeringly of that man, as if she were embarrassed, so Winthrop had never brought up the subject again, and it did not even occur to him that the Legionnaire might be "Miss Luck's" brother.

While they were drinking tea in the palm court of the big French hotel, with its mixed decoration of Arab and nouveau art, Si Mahmoud Bel Hassan arrived, and was introduced by Winthrop to the ladies. It was a relief to Norah to see that he wore European dress, with nothing but his dark skin and the red fez on his close-cropped black head to show that he was an Arab. He spoke in perfect French, and assured Miss Luck that his cousins were looking forward with great excitement to seeing her.

"I think you will be a surprise to them, mademoiselle," he added, saying "you" instead of "thou," because his customs were more French than Arab.

"A surprise?" Norah faltered, feeling rather like a bashful schoolgirl. "Why?"

Si Mahmoud smiled pleasantly but

mysteriously.

"I do not feel that I can venture to tell you why," he said. "But I am almost sure they will let you know within the first three minutes after your meeting them. Their father's carriage, and their own servant, a black woman who is very ugly, but need not alarm you, will come in a few minutes to take you to the house, mademoiselle."

Norah tried to murmur politely that

she was delighted at the prospect, but her eyes happened to meet Winthrop's for an instant, and such a stab shot through her heart that she forgot to speak.

And it was all that the Virginian could do to keep his self-control.

Still worse was it for him when the carriage actually arrived; a strange carriage to Norah's eyes, though Winthrop had seen many like it; and to those accustomed to the life of the East it was a very ordinary sight indeed; a conveyance sacred to the women of a rich Arab's household.

It was somewhat shabby, for it had been in the family since Ferid El Khadra was a boy, it never having occurred to him that it was necessary to buy a new one. All the harem carriages of Tunis were shabby, therefore it would have seemed ostentatious to be different from one's neighbors.

The two ladies from Algiers came out to the hotel steps, greatly interested in their little traveling companion's departure, and Mahmoud stood politely by their side; but Winthrop went with the girl to the pavement, superintending the handling of her small luggage, which she was to take with her. Later, porters from old Tunis would come to carry away her larger boxes.

"Promise you'll write to me tonight," the American implored, "and tell me how you like everything and everybody." His voice dropped to a lower tone so that Mahmoud need not hear and have his feelings hurt. "If you're not happy, I'll find you something else to do. I'll stay at this hotel for two nights, till after our friends have started back in the car. Then I'll be at the Hotel Hamilcar, at Carthage, where I told you I'm going to do some work. You don't know how anxious I'll be to hear from you—and to get good news."

"Thank you again—for everything, and—I'll write," said Norah, longing to cry, her heart beating fast and thickly. "Good-by."

He pressed her hand so hard that it hurt, but somehow she liked the hurt. Then, motioning the negro servant aside, he was about to help her into the carriage, when she started back a little in surprise at seeing a veiled figure sitting motionless as a statue in the darkened interior. But it was only the Soudanese woman of whom Mahmoud had spoken; and at sight of the European girl's start, the big, round eyes looking over the veil sparkled with childlike amusement.

This made the statue seem more human, less mysterious; and Norah got into the carriage with at least an appearance of courage. In another instant the door was shut, the blind drawn up, and she sat with the negress in a dim twilight, perfumed subtly by the hidden amulets on Nouna's breast.

CHAPTER VI.

THE SURPRISE.

Mahmoud had sent word to Laïla that the English lady had arrived in Tunis, and might be expected at a certain hour.

The two girls, into whose cloistered lives so few excitements came, were wrought up to the highest pitch of expectation, though Laïla was prepared to dislike the companion, who, she said, would probably turn out to be a dragon.

They were talking in the patio, when there was a stir outside, and they guessed, with hearts beating, that the "dragon" was at the door.

Nouna brought the new arrival in, proud of her responsibility, and the sensation she was bound to create; for she knew what the sisters expected, and the surprise in store for them. What they saw was a girl who locked no older than they, and almost as shy as Ourieda. She was slender and not very tall. Her beautiful dark-blue eyes were wide with excitement or dread of the unknown, and suddenly it seemed too deliciously funny to Ourieda that the awe-inspiring governess should be afraid of them.

She broke into laughter—the childish, flutelike laughter of the well-bred Arab girl—and ran to Norah.

"Oh, but thou art young, like us, and very, very pretty!" she exclaimed in

musical French. "How glad we are to see thee."

And she took Norah's hands, impulsively kissing her on both cheeks.

Laïla came forward, too, though slowly and with dignity. She was not easily won to love or admiration, and on this she prided herself, not realizing that her critical attitude toward other women was a proof of latent jealousy rather than keenness of judgment. She had no feeling of love for Norah now, but as she saw no reason to be jealous of her, she was glad that Miss Luck was young and pleasant to look at, instead of elderly and fussy.

Laïla's manner, though more stately than Ourieda's, was just as charming in its way; and Norah could not guess at the subtle Oriental reasoning that made it so sweet. She was bewitched with both girls, who seemed to her like enchanting tropical flowers, "come alive" in this wonderful, hidden garden behind the blank white wall. She thought the warm Arab greeting, with the two kisses, quite beautiful, and laughed to herself as she thought how different would be the welcome of a new governess or companion by English girls.

"We were afraid thou wouldst be old and not pretty," said Ourïeda. "But thou art lovely. Thou art the greatest surprise to us; and nothing has ever happened to me so pleasant as thy coming. Of course with Laïla it is a little different, because-perhaps thou knowest?-she is engaged. Our Cousin Mahmoud must be the best thing that has happened to her, I suppose! But I am never going to be married, and maybe thou wilt always live here with my father and me."

"Even if no one ever asks for thee in marriage," laughed Laïla, "there will be many seeking for Miss Luck, so thou wilt lose her soon, maybe even sooner than thou losest me; but it is true, as Ourieda says, our new companion is a

great surprise to us."

Norah laughed. As the girls used "thee" and "thou" to her, in their soft, fluting French, she spoke in the same way to them, lest the more formal "you" should sound harsh and un-

friendly in their ears. "Thy fiancé. Sidi Mahmoud Bel Hassan, told me I would be a surprise, and I could not think what he meant," she said. "He would not explain, but told me I should find out from his cousins before I had been with them many minutes. I didn't know that the mystery would be so pleasant, and such a compliment to me."

The girls looked at each other. "Does it not seem strange," said Ourïeda, "that she can talk to Mahmoud and other men who are not her father or cousins. yet that it is no harm? How does it feel," she asked eagerly, "to speak with young men, and have them look straight into thy unveiled face? Didst thou not wish, when it first happened, to scream and run away and hide thyself, or at least to cover thy face with thy two hands?"

"Why, it began to happen when I was so young that it was all quite nat-ural," smiled Norah. "I've been more with men than with women, I think, ever since I was a baby, because I have a dear twin brother, and I was always with him and his friends, as we had no sister. And my mother died when

I was a little girl."

"So did ours," said Ourieda eagerly. "And we have only each other, because our father never married again. Our Aunt Aïssa lives with us. Thou wilt see her soon, when she finishes the sleep she always takes in the afternoon. When we were little girls, we, too, were unveiled, and we had much fun, because we could run about and go to school. But it is now five years that Laïla has been hadjaba—that means. veiled and shut up-and four years since I, too, have been put in the cage."

"But thou canst go out surely!" exclaimed Norah. "No one can live with-

out exercise!"

"Oh, exercise!" laughed "What does a woman want of exercise? We walk a little in the country when we go to my father's place there in August and September; but it is very boring. We are taken to the cemetery, too, on Fridays, in our carriage; and when we are once there we are allowed to walk, because Friday is the women's

day, and no man can come near. It is not very interesting, for the friends we meet have little to say which can amuse us, at least nothing they will tell to young girls. That is all the exercise we get, except here in the garden court. Unless thou callest it exercise to drive about in a closed-up carriage, and peep through the shutters at the shops and the French officers. That is the most amusing thing we do-except to go to the baths, which are reserved for us and some of our friends on a certain morning each week. Also, I like very much to read French novels and eat French bonbons, which Mahmoud brings me every day. That, too, is better than exercise."

Norah made no comment, but she wondered how she, used to taking long walks each day, could bear the cloistered life. But perhaps she would be allowed to go out. She wondered, though she dared not ask yet. It was too soon to beg for privileges denied to

the girls.

"We are keeping Miss Luck here, telling about ourselves, when she would like to see her room," said Ourïeda. "Let us take her there, and to our rooms, too, before Aunt Aïssa wakes up. It will be more fun."

Laïla approved this plan; and, with their arms round Norah's waist, they took her to the marble stairs which led up to the gallery, and the bedrooms in

the story above.

Ourieda threw open a carved cedarwood door, which had a mirror on the other side, latticed over with a pattern

of gilded wood.

"This is thy bedroom," she said. "It is next to mine, and Laïla's is beyond. Opposite is Aunt Aïssa's. The servants are in another part of the house, and my father's rooms are far away. He has another garden court, and reception rooms for his friends. But sometimes, as a great treat, he dines with us. I do not know if he will do it now thou art here; but perhaps, since thou art English, thou wouldst not find it embarrassing to eat in the company of a strange man."

"No, indeed. If thy father will not

object to my presence, I shall certainly not object to his," Norah assured her. "What a lovely room! I shall feel as if I were living in a fairy story."

The ceiling of the long, narrow room was of cedar wood, beamed and gorgeously painted like that of the gallery outside, which ran round the garden court. The walls were hung with pan-els of brocade and old embroideries, above which ran a line of illuminated texts from the Koran; and between the hangings, space was left for doors, windows, and cupboards let into the walls. No windows opened to the outside of the house, but there were two looking into the court; and they had shutters of cedar wood, elaborately inlaid with leaf and flower patterns of mother-o'-pearl. The cupboards had shutterlike doors of the same design; and, these standing slightly ajar, Norah could see that they were fitted with a great many narrow shelves, backed with mirrors. Evidently Arab ladies did not hang up their dresses-and the girl had visions of herself rolling her frocks and jackets in little tight bundles and laving them in neat rows on the shelves. Luckily, she thought, most of her hats were small, and she had brought comparatively few things.

At one end of the room stood a splendid Tunisian bed, green and gold, having gilded posts and a canopy with a great gold crown over a carved golden Thin silk curtains hung from the crown, and there was a coverlet to match of green, purple, and gold; but Norah could see no trace of pillows. At the other end of the room was a low, long table, entirely covered with an inlay of mother-o'-pearl, and above was a mirror in a mother-o'-pearl frame. A little cushioned bench crusted with the same gleaming, snowlike surface of pearl was drawn up in front of the table, but Norah's anxious eyes found no washing arrangements at all.

"Nouna will bring all the things necessary for thy baths, night and morning," said Laïla, "I have read in French novels of the way Europeans arrange their bathing; but we like our things brought in newly each time,

though we bathe a good deal, for it is in our religion. And every week we go out to the Moorish Bath, as we have told thee already. Thou shalt go, too, if thou wilt, with Nouna to take care of us, as always; but, perhaps, now we have thee, Aunt Aïssa will sometimes stop at home. She is too weak for the hottest room now she is old; and we shall be glad not to have her fuss over us and see that we hear no amusing gossip from the attendants. We hope that with us thou wilt miss none of the comforts to which thou wert used in thy far-off European home. We wish thee to be happy here."

Of course Norah insisted that she would miss nothing; that all was perfect; and enchanted with her admiration of everything Tunisian, the girls took her to visit their rooms, which were much the same as hers, and showed little more sign of habitation.

The sisters then took their new playfellow downstairs to see the room in which they, with Aunt Aïssa, received such women friends as came to call upon them. It had splendid panels of quaint tiles, between brocade hangings; bands of exquisite designs in lacelike stucco work ran round the walls, and there were many big, elaborate, goldframed mirrors, and little pearl-crusted tables, or "maidas." On the tiled floor lay several magnificent Persian rugs, which Norah knew to be almost beyond price. The glitter of mirror glass behind gilded lattice, and, as a backing for quaintly fashioned buffets, gave extraordinary brightness to the room, and there was no jarring modern note anywhere. This seemed the one fitting background for the two beautiful girls in their gauze bodices, their embroidered jackets, soft, loose silk trousers, and tiny, gold-crusted slippers. Norah felt as if she must be dreaming the lovely creatures, and might wake up at any moment to find that they, and their Arabian Nights palace, had vanished from her eyes forever.

As the three came out again into the fragrant patio, where it was always cool in the shadow of the gallery, "Aunt Aïssa" appeared, and Norah was in-

structed that, in Arabic, "Lella" meant "Madame." It was strange to the English girl to see an old lady, very thin, very dignified, and darker of complexion than her nieces, dressed in the picturesque costume which became them

so well.

There were a number of questions which the girls' aunt wished the new-comer to answer, not only about her accomplishments, but about herself, for the old lady was as keenly curious as her nieces. Where had Miss Luck lived? When had her parents died? Who had taken care of her since then? Was she considered of a marriageable age in her own country? Did she use any wash to keep her complexion so fair, and, if so, what was the recipe?

Norah answered everything frankly enough, and tried not to laugh when Lella Aïssa inquired if a love disappointment were the cause of her leaving England. A laugh would have given grave offense, she knew; so she replied that her reason for coming to Africa was because her brother was there. She was on the point of adding that he was in the Foreign Legion, but she remembered just in time that this would probably be considered extraordinary, if not disgraceful. A hundred more questions would be asked by Lella Aissa about Pat, and, if she showed any reluctance to answer, a disagreeable mystery would be suspected at once. Norah was quite willing to be frank about herself, but she had no right to give away Pat's secrets.

Lella Aïssa seemed satisfied when she had heard from Miss Luck that her brother was "traveling" at present in the direction of Morocco; but Norah noticed the most intense eagerness on

Laïla's face.

"When the aunt is out of the way that girl will ask me more about Pat," she thought. "No wonder poor little caged birds like this are dying of curiosity about everything and everybody outside their prison. But I'll be careful—very careful."

As Norah was wondering when she might go to her room for a little rest, or to do her unpacking, a door, which

had been shut, opened, and a handsome, dark man came into the fountain court. Unlike Mahmoud, who wore European dress and a small red chechia on his smooth, dark hair, this man, who might have been fifty or a little more, hid his head with a snow-white turban and wore a reddish-brown gandourah, embroidered with green, over a pale-green vest. Over the gandourah, a long cloak of white silk floated like a cloud, reaching nearly to his feet, which were clad in silk stockings and green leather babouches or slippers. He was tall and thin, with a fine aquiline profile, and sad, proud eves, deeply set.

Both girls sprang up and ran to him, crying "Sidi—sidi!" which Norah knew meant the same as seignour or master. Lella Aïssa rose, too, with an air of respect very different from the carelessly affectionate manner of a sister to a brother in Western countries. When the girls had kissed their father's hand, and been kissed by him on their foreheads, Laïla introduced Norah.

"This is Miss Luck," she said. "And this is our father, Sidi Ferid El Khadra."

The Arab smiled and welcomed the English girl cordially, in perfect though rather guttural French; but Norah, admiring him, still felt dimly that he might be a hard man if crossed in any wish close to his heart. He scarcely tried to conceal the fact that Ourieda was his favorite. When he sat down he kept her standing beside him, holding her hand as he talked. Then, for the first time, there came a flash of divination to Norah, and she saw that in this fairy palace of fountains and jasmine and roses, all was not perfect peace. She was sorry for Laïla, who pressed her lips together and turned away; but, when Ourieda asked some laughing question, her sister flashed a quick glance at the younger girl which almost frightened Norah.

"She is like a young tigress who has hardly found out that it is a tigress yet," she thought. But there was a tragic fire in the girl's eyes which Norah could not understand, because she did not know the terrible story of the two mothers.

"This is a great day for this house," El Khadra said when he had finished drinking the first cup of coffee that was brought him.

"A great day because we have a new friend with us," added Ourieda, smiling from her father to Norah.

"Yes, because of that; but because of something else, too," he answered. "It is a good omen for Miss Luck that she should come at the same time. Canst thou guess at all what may have happened to make this a day beyond others for some, or one, of us?"

He looked at Ourieda, and she shook her head. Then he turned his eyes upon Laïla, and they grew colder.

"And thou?" he inquired. "Thou who art so clever; thou, whose great pleasure it is to read French novels which tell thee of women's lives in Europe?"

Laïla blushed deeply. She had not supposed that El Khadra knew of the novel reading, and she was frightened; but he divined her thoughts, and spoke before she could try to excuse herself. "Oh, I know," he said, smiling faintly. "There are little birds who whisper, as well as sing, in the garden. But do not think it is Ourieda who has told me. Thou wouldst be doing her an injustice. Because thou art engaged to thy cousin, thou mayest now read what thou choosest. In a few months thou wilt be his wife, and it will be for him to direct thy ways. But thou hast not made thy guess."

"I-can think of no reason," stammered Laïla.

"Then thou hast, after all, profited but little from thy novel reading."

"Does the great thing that has happened concern us?" Ourïeda asked hastily.

"It concerns either thee or thy sister. At this moment I do not propose to tell more, unless thou canst guess for thyself. Evidently a certain lady has not been here since I went away, or the family would at least have its suspicions"

Laïla and her sister gazed into one another's eyes, each asking the other what the wonderful thing could be. El Khadra had been visiting the bey at his country seat since last night, and they had expected to hear some details of the visit, but nothing which could in any way concern themselves.

"Oh, sidi, do not keep us in suspense," Ourïeda pleaded.

"Only till I have talked with thine Aunt Aïssa of this thing. Then thou shalt know, and Laïla, too-and Miss Luck; all shall know and rejoice," said her father, looking at her beautiful little rose-and-ivory face with tender admiration and love. "All three may go now, and leave me with my sister.'

"May I send a note and a telegram?"

asked Norah anxiously, as she went into the house with the two girls.

"But, yes!" they answered together. "We have no forms for the post," Laïla went on, "for we never telegraph to any one. Thou must write on a plain piece of paper, and Nouna will give it and thy letter to Miloud, who will run to the post office. There is one condition, though." And the girl laughed.

"What is that?"

"It is that thou showest us thy brother's picture, for we are sure thou hast it with thee. And we are sure also that thy telegram will be for him.'

"I will show his photograph with pleasure," Norah answered. should I not?" she asked herself. "Surely that can do harm to no one!"

TO BE CONTINUED.



The Hills of Kirkland

LOOKED across the valley, I looked across the wold, And all the hills of Kirkland Were bathed in April gold.

The south wind sued me, wooed me: "Why, laggard, do you wait When all the hills of Kirkland Are clothed in green estate?"

I heard the bluebirds marry Their silvery words of rhyme: In all the hills of Kirkland It was the mating time!

A fleeting form before me As lissome as a reed— 'Mid all the hills of Kirkland 'Twas mating time indeed! CLINTON SCOLLARD.



HE styles for spring are a continuation of what we have had this winter. There may be a few changes in May or June, but so far there are no breakers ahead. It looks like smooth sailing for the woman who wants to prepare her spring sewing now. No prophet is so wise or far-knowing as to definitely say that this style will last and that style will go out. Our changes are now coming in June rather than in March. It has become the custom to risk one's spring clothes on winter lines, and not make one's summer clothes until the middle of June.

We have gotten into the foreign fashion of dividing our year into four, instead of two, parts. Our climate helps us in this, for the summer is too hot for the clothes of April, and February is too bitter for the clothes of October. Our only economy is to make our spring clothes last through the following autumn. This cannot always be done with regard to fashions, because the designers seem bent upon keeping us from the pleasure and economy of alteration.

And this fact, in itself, has brought about an immense sale by the shops of inexpensive ready-made clothes that can be discarded when the seasons and the fashions change, without giving the wearer any qualms. The progress made by the shops of America in the manufacture and sale of ready-to-wear garments is a wonderful piece of thrift and progressiveness. One cannot begin to find such an advance in Europe. The shops there have no idea of serving their patrons with the wide variety and the excellent workmanship of readymade garments that the American shop

does, even in a small town.

The buyers for these shops get their ideas in New York and Chicago, and carry to the small towns the latest things in coats and skirts, in one-piece frocks and blouses. The American woman is saved the ceaseless stitchery and fatiguing trying-on by this business method, and she usually feels safer in buying something that she knows is new and good than to depend on a seamstress and her own ingenuity to construct a gown or coat suit.

The busy woman who is now planning her spring wardrobe is wondering about the cut of skirts, the shape of blouses, and the lines of coats. only do these major details interest her, but she is keenly alive to the fact that it is in the minor changes that a woman shows whether or not she is in style.

And just here do let me go into a discussion that has to do with dress at all times instead of fashion for one season. The discussion concerns this very fact of being careful about the small things one wears. For instance, a woman will get a new suit. It will have the approved skirt built on scanty lines, and the short coat, with its singlebreasted fastening and its mannish sleeves. Her hat will be on fashionable



Spring walking suit of dark-blue serge, trimmed with bands of narrow black silk braid.



Coat and skirt of Delft blue linen, trimmed with a bold design in white mercerized braid. The one rever and the collar are of velveteen.



Indoor gown for any afternoon affair. It is made of blue veiling over a skirt of cream lace. The Grecian blouse is trimmed with a pink satin rose.

lines, whether it is a cap, a turban, or a large sailor. She will have spent much time and some money on the selection of this costume. She will go to infinite trou-

ble to get the right shade of cloth, and the best pattern for the gores, and she will study the question of revers and collars.

With the costume she will then put on a blouse that has plaits at the shoulders, sleeves with gathers that make the fullness stand out and up at the shoulder line, and add shoes that are not in good condition and are cut on the old-fashioned Oxford plan. Now, if she had

only spared a little more time and had her blouse and shoes correctly chosen, she would have presented the appearance of a well-dressed woman; but her suit and hat cannot atone for the defects of her blouse and shoes. She is wrong at the neck and the feet, and these two extremities, wrongly treated, mar the whole.

One even hears a woman say that she keeps certain gowns or old blouses because they are too much trouble to alter and too good to throw away, and yet she will wear these things at the very wrong moment, whereas if she had taken the trouble to alter them she would never be put in the position of wishing she had left the garment at home.

You know you always have on the wrong blouse when you are asked to stay for lunch somewhere, and must remove your coat. You look dowdy, and



Spring house gown for young girl, made of eyelet embroidered muslin. The skirt is in two flounces on a narrow foundation, and the peasant blouse is slightly low at the neck. The gown is worn over a soft silk colored slip.

you are painfully conscious of the fact that your collar is awry, that your sleeves are full, and therefore crushed, and that there are one or two buttons missing off the back of the blouse. If you had changed this blouse into the new shape during a morning's work, you would not have been caught nap-

So it goes through the whole gamut of clothes that we become careless about because they have seen their best days. These are the ones we always have on when it is most necessary for us to have on good ones; and the remedy lies in keeping the minor details of our wardrobe up to the mark. There is no use in spending your whole dress allowance on a fashionable gown or suit, and adding the wrong accessories to it. Try to make your money go around so that it covers the right shoes, gloves, and veil, even if you have to economize on the gown and hat. It is the woman who is well turned out and correct in every detail of dress who gets the reputation of being well-dressed; this laurel wreath never goes to the woman who has a few fashionable major garments, and none of the right minor ones.

As the question of blouses is important, it might be worth while to discuss them now because this is an excellent time for the making of new ones. Those women have worn all winter are showing signs of wear and tear, and the thin muslin ones that are worn in summer are yet too cool for these intervening weeks. As blouses are so simple these days, and are not expensive, every woman can indulge in the luxury of having two or three new ones to match

her everyday suit.

Satin is the prevailing choice for these separate waists, and the peasant pattern is to be used all spring and summer. The sleeves are cut closer to the armhole, and there is not that wide squareness under the arm that droops to the waist. This can be used if a woman likes it, and there is no doubt that it is very becoming to slender figures. It is arranged with wide-pointed gussets let in exactly under the armpit. These give freedom to the arm, and are

quite good for those who wear their blouses steadily throughout the arduous hours of the day. The more fashionable sleeve, however, is closer to the arm, and is put in without gussets. There is no return to the armhole seam. Every sleeve is cut in one with the shoulders, no matter whether it is long or short.

The blouse should have a lining, but it is not boned. If the figure is extra stout, then a girdle of featherbones can be inserted. The latter must not run up high, as the new corsets are excessively low in the bust, and the "pushedup" figure is utterly out of style. This is the result of the Empire and Grecian modes, and as both promise to remain in for the next two months at least, it would be wise to wear such corsets even

if one has not done so before.

If the lining is of muslin or pongee it can be washed. China silk is even better, although a bit more expensive, because none but the good quality will stand the strain of skin moisture and constant washing. These linings are made like a short chemise, and are complete in themselves. Sometimes they are tacked to the armhole and the neck, but recently they are worn as a separate garment under the blouse and over the corset cover. On figures that are flatchested there are two or three ruffles put on the inside of the satin, and made of the material. These are rather necessary in a peasant blouse, which is apt to make one look flat, anyway.

The only trimming used on this is a piping of satin in the same or in an opposite color, or an applied design of Egyptian or Bulgarian colors. The collar is omitted, and a guimpe with a stock attached is added to the lining so the blouse can be worn low or high. Some women prefer a lining of coarse net that carries its own collar with it. The net washes as well as the silk or

muslin.

If one wants to make a dressier blouse, the satin may be covered with chiffon cloth, not chiffon, as the latter is perishable and gets stringy even when it does not actually wear out. It is cut on the peasant lines and dropped over

the satin, caught only at the neck and waist line. Underneath it one may put a Maltese cross, back and front, of silver or gold cloth, or ribbon, with connecting links under the arm. Small pieces of tapestry with bright colors are also used as well as floral ribbon. It is quite the fashion to have some kind of colorful trimming introduced between the transparent outer blouse and the satin under blouse. All the smart blouses are made as though there were to be no thin outer covering, and then the unadorned chiffon cloth is used like a drop curtain.

While it is necessary for fashion's sake to have the general effect of the blouse match

the skirt in color, there can be all manner of color schemes worked out on the foundation. A blue serge suit carries a blouse

of blue chiffon cloth which has hemstitching as its only trimming. This is dropped over a lining of green satin, which has figures on it of aluminum lace. Another blouse which goes with this same suit is a smoked-gray chiffon cloth under blue mousseline, and one is worked in a silver thread, while the otherthe gray tone-is worked with tiny coral beads. Both these slips are cut low at the neck, the upper one an inch higher than the lower one, and beneath both is a guimpe of thin white lace, which ends at the base of the neck.

This is also the time of year when a woman wants to make simple one-piece frocks, so she allows her to go without a coat. edged with velvet.



One-piece gown of tan marquisette, with the envelope skirt. will be able to get right into The blouse has an oddly shaped collar of bronze velvet with a them as soon as the weather small batiste collar laid over it. The elbow sleeves are also



Spring gown of soft silk, with tunic edged with scrolls of silk braid and band of velvet. The bodice has a deep, square neck half filled in with white net and lace. There is a wide bow of velvet as a finish.

There is no doubt in the minds of those who study fashions that the skirt and bodice on the same belt, fastened up back or front, will be a feature of the spring styles.

After women have found out how entirely convenient such a gown is they are loath to go back to the universal wearing of a coat, a skirt, and a blouse. They want the convenience of the frock-in-one with its easy fastenings. It is also cooler than three pieces, because we have learned how to use thin material over the shoulders and arms. The disadvantage of the old-time frock



Coat and skirt of black satin for afternoon wear. Sailor collar and wide cuffs of black velveteen half covered with embroidered muslin.

was that its warm cloth came up to the neck line. This was all very well for the street, but it was uncomfortable for the house, and it could only be worn on days that had enough chill in them to allow cloth over the shoulders.

The woman who is going to work on these one-piece frocks now wants to get foulard or marquisette to match the cloth. Her choice in the latter is again serge, which promises to be excessively popular in black, blue, and white. The thin twill will be used, and the cloth is an admirable choice for an everyday frock that must give good wear.

The best models will have scanty skirts, but this need not frighten the conservative woman. She can have her foot line two yards wide, or a bit more, if she is stout. If she will only learn how to cut the skirt narrow at the hem, and gracefully wide at the knees, across the back, and at the hips, she will have a skirt to which she can find no ob-

iection.

The bodices in the new models are cut on peasant lines, in the sense that the sleeves are in one with the shoulders, but the neck is surplice instead of round. This new line is coming into fashion more every week, and promises to be quite popular because it is more becoming to the majority of faces than the round, half-low one is. The surplice is not very deep, and is filled in with a guimpe and stock of white or colored chiffon cloth, hemstitched at the edge.

The sailor collar of old embroidered muslin in an ivory tint and the hemstitched one of white chiffon cloth are both worn on this kind of a neck, and they take away from any hollowness at the shoulders or across the chest. The satin or velvet bow is used at the point of the V, and a new touch is to drop long tassels of coarse net from this bow with balls of silk cord on the end.

The belt of these one-piece frocks is a trifle high-waisted, and is more often made of braid than of any other material. It is fastened at the back under

a flat and small geisha bow.

These bows, by the way, are to be quite a feature of the spring frocks, and they are shown in many materials. On evening gowns they are of black tulle, or gold or silver cloth; on house gowns they are made of satin in bril-

liant colors.

Marquisette is to remain in high favor through the season for all kinds of frocks. It is more expensive than the serge, for it requires a lining, but it will also give service for formal as well as informal hours. One of the best new models in it is of smoked gray over a short, scanty slip of lining satin in the same color. The skirt is slightly full. and starts an inch above the waist line. It is trimmed at knees and hem with a three-inch fold of gray moire. The girdle is of this moire, and is finished with quite a wide geisha bow at the back, in the middle of which is a jet buckle. The bodice is on scanty peasant lines, cut down into a rounded V in front and a long, pointed V at back. This is filled in with thin white lace covered with black chiffon. The stock is made of these two materials, and so is the undersleeve, which ends below the elbow and is nearly covered by the peasant sleeve of marquisette.

This model is made in black, but it will be followed in all fashionable colors. It is not good for any but a thin material, and any kind of veiling will

corvo

A good model for a blue serge suit has a scanty skirt with a box plait down the back, and seams at the side that do not flare. Remember, all seams shape in at the foot instead of out. Around the knees there are detached bands of four-inch black silk braid, not meeting by two inches. The belt is of braid, and the surplice blouse with its peasant sleeve is edged with braid. It is fastened down the back, and has a small yoke and stock of white and black net run together in horizontal bands, each an inch wide.

This latter idea, by the way, is the

new thing in vokes.



The Perennial Feminine (AND MORE OF THE ANNUAL MASCULINE)

By Edwin L. Sabin

ILLUSTRATED BY SIGURD SCHOU

AROLD, of Naughty-'leven, strode blithely down the street in mutual companionship with "Punk" Norris, of Naughty-eight. For they both were of Delta Phi Omicron; which is to say, truthfully, that Punk was the real thing, fully endowed, and that Harold was the novitiate. But a novitiate, who has been invested with a "pledge" pin, and who now is upon the

very eve of initiation, is so "near" that he practically is the "same as"—huh? Moreover, Harold's trousers were the farthest rolled, and his attire was generally the more recklessly pronounced; and had it not been for the telltale figures '11 upon his rakish little cap, who would have known him for the freshman? That is, according to his own fond notion.

However, one may be a freshman, and yet may walk in unison and apparent equality with a senior, when one is

about to join "the frat."

What an exalted, expectant sensation, as one is conscious that within a few short hours one will be an accepted member of the best frat existing. That Delta Phi Omicron was the best Greek letter fraternity Punk Norris and his associates had proven by statistics and other facts not to be denied. Did not Delta Phi Omicron marshal four United States senators, six representatives, two governors, a consul general, a brigadier general, two prominent authors, two well-known pulpit orators, and other dignitaries of national importance -not to speak of three members of the faculty?

Besides, had it not been impressed upon him, Harold, that the Delta Phi boys were the boys of the university? They were the society leaders; and by their very own admission whatever they wanted they took, and what they happened not to have they didn't want;

See ?

Finally he could not help but feel under obligations, rather, to them because they, represented by Norris, had introduced him to Miss Brown—to Lucille; his Lucille: the sweetest, dandiest little

girl in the world!

"Oh, you must be a Delta Phi," she had counseled; and what else had passed between them he must not tell. would show that although a freshman, he could be a loyal gallant; and that he did not respect her a bit less for-for treating him so friendly. She was perfectly innocent when she-when she let him kiss her, and when she kissed him back. Of that he was sure. And it seemed natural, too; there was nothing wrong in it-for just them two. She had his picture, and he was to have hers. Why he had been selected to win her he could not imagine, save that it was his great luck-coupled, perhaps, with certain extra qualities of personality.

He would take her to all the Delta Phi parties, etc.; and other people should envy them their utter comradeship and steadfast affection. You bet! And he hoped that in due time his roommate, rude and callous, would come to see the bad taste of bantering him, Harold, about squeezing his, the roommate's, hand during dreams o' nights. Possibly he, the roommate, would, when he caught on to who the girl was. If not, then he, Harold, eventually must sit upon him, Senior Law and Webster-like though he, the roommate, was; unless, of course, he, Harold, obtained freshman quarters in the Delta Phi chapter house first.

To join a college fraternity may seem but a minor matter, just as joining a high-school fraternity does. But Harold, reasoning from his high-school experience, was vaguely apprehensive. There probably was no comparison between Delta Phi Omicron, and child-ish Tau Pi—much as he had valued Tau Pi. What would be done to him?

However, he felt that he could bear everything like a hero; for She would

be waiting to exult with him.

The afternoon preliminaries were not so bad, being chiefly embarrassing and distracting. He was convoyed all over town, compelled to seek a pair of left-handed shoe laces. He was made to roll a peanut up the main walk to the central building—being supplied with a toothpick for lever, and being gravely watched by Punk and a concourse. And at the goal he had to eat the peanut, which was obnoxious in the seeming rather than in the reality, for he was permitted to discard the shell. Still, a fellow looked somewhat piggy, crunching at command.

He was dispatched to the Mu Mu sorority house, to volunteer his services as a waiter at table. The Mu Mus treated him nicely, and only mildly tittered at his blushes. Some of the Mu Mus were right pretty, too. He male mental reservation of the fact, for future reference. But none—except, perhaps, just one, with big brown eyes and rose-leaf cheeks and a dimple—could match up with his Lucille; and 'twas useless for them to try for him.

The apprenticeship stunts were to be

followed by the regular initiation, with the ritual, at night. After that, a fellow was a genuine Delta Phi.

Only a ghastly blue light burned in the large room, throwing a flickering, far from reassuring illumination upon the mysterious objects. His bandage having been removed, Harold, sore and bewildered, blinked around him. The Tau Pi initiation had been nothing to this.

All about were ranged figures, motionless, in yellow robes and black masks, which completely concealed. Harold's guides led him to a dais, upon which stood one of the figures, and halted him before it. Amid the sepulchral silence he waited, uneasy. In hollow, solemn tone the figure upon the dais addressed him.

"Neophyte, you have so far conducted yourself fairly well." The voice sounded suspiciously like Punk's; still, who could be certain? "But much remains to be encountered yet, before you are entitled to wear the badge of Delta Phi Omicron. Here, in a band of brothers where all are equal, and where heart beats with heart, we must ever keep in mind the words of our motto: Love of Truth. Did you ever kiss a girl?"

Harold hesitated. The silence was oppressive. The room evidently hung upon his answer. 'Twas a supreme test. His heart thumped, shaking him with

his violence.

To say that he had not kissed a girl -ah, what a humiliating confession, and one that would not be believed, anyway. To speak the truth, and admit-no, no; he must be careful.

"Must I answer?" he inquired tremu-

"You must," declared the figure. "And, remember, neophyte, the truth." "Then-once," faltered Harold, con-

scious that he was suffused with blushes

redder than his abrasions.

"Only once, eh?" commented the figure solemnly. Somebody in the room sniggered, and was sternly reproved by numerous "Sh's!" Harold resented the snigger. "When, and whom?"

"A girl, at home," answered Harold boldly.

"Oh! Little high-school girl. Well,

what was her name?"

Still they were doubting him, were they? All right; he could "show" them. "Beulah Emerson." Poor Beulah; she had to be sacrificed.

"Did she kiss you back?"

"No, she didn't." Now would they quit? He was getting cross.

"Who else?"

Alas!

"You mean-other girl?" he asked

appealingly.
"I do. What other girl have you kissed?"

"Ever?"

"Ever." The stipulation was inflexi-

"Must I answer?"

"You must."

There were several sniggers, and "Sh's!" Silence reigned again; tense silence. Well, it might seem funny to some of them, but it wasn't funny to him. Or was he just being "worked"? Huh!

"Supposing I don't tell?" he haz-

arded, with faint resistance.

"Oh! Oh!" chorused the cries, intermingling with menacing groans. "Háng him! Hang him! Put him

Thunder! He meant-of course-"Does everybody have to answer such

questions?"

"That is none of your affair. You heard. Go on. And be very sure that you speak the truth. Remember, you are not admitted yet. You are only on probation, and this is a very important test."

"What was the q-question?"

"What other girls have you kissed? Promptly, now; you're delaying the

Harold shifted helplessly.

"One."

"Whom, and where?"

"Here."

"In the university? At the univer-

"Yes-sir." Perhaps the "sir" would placate. There were subdued sniggers,



"Yes, the record is one he should be ashamed of," agreed the "boo-gun." "What shall the punishment be?"

trickling through the tense atmosphere. What were the darned fools sniggering at, anyway? He wished that he never had started in to join the fraternity.

"Whon?" "Who?" he stammered, sparring for time.

"No. WHOM? W-H-O-M. Feminine accusative. Hurry up!"

"Lu-Lucille B-r-own,"

"Oh! Oh!" Again that disapproving chorus—with a bewildering contradictory gust of merriment. The crowd certainly was hard to please.

"Once?"
"More."

"The first time you called?"

"The second."

"Oh! Oh!" And groans. "Why not the first?"

"Punk Norris took me, the first time."

And again those sniggers, without apparent cause.

The cross-examiner choked, and coughed, and continued:

"I see. 'Twas the first time that you called alone, then."

"Y-yes. But we c-couldn't help it," pleaded Harold.

"What time was it?"

"What time? In the ev-evening."

"I mean, what time by the clock."

"Half-past nin-nine."
"Oh! Oh!" The cries and groans were positively savage. Dear me! What was the matter now?

"Half-past nine. And did you prom-

ise not to tell?"

"Yes; but you've made me," Harold retorted indignantly. Let them remember that!

"Did you put your arm around her?"

"Y-yes." "Where?"

"Her-waist."

The room was swept with a spasm of atrocious gayety. Harold's twain guides, on either side of him, doubled poignantly. The cross-examining figure coughed again, and in a thick voice resumed:

"Very good. Whereabouts in the

room?"

"On the c-couch." "Couch object?"

"No, sir."

"Thank you. Always say 'sir' when you address me. What number are

you?" "I don't know what you mean." Harold answered sulkily. He was tired. Why couldn't they quit! Already he had said too much. Confound them!

"What number are you on the list?"

"What list?" "Her list."

"I don't know of any list."

"What number is he, heralds?"

"We have looked it up on our records, worthy boo-gun, and we find that he must be twenty-three," responded the right-hand guide.

"Has he well proven himself, broth-

ers?"

"No-o-o!" The dictum was a howl of appalling unanimity! Harold was aghast. Yet he had answered to the best of his knowledge.

"Wherein has he failed?"

"He has betrayed sacred confidence." "But I had to tell, didn't I? I was to speak the truth!" remonstrated Harold to the figure.

"To kiss a girl and then to tell is an offense beyond palliation," decreed the magistrate. What did they call him? Oh, yes, "boo-gun," "It is an offense hitherto unheard among our sacred circle. And wherein else did he fail, brothers?"

"He was there until half-past nine before doing it," chorused the members.

"Yes, the record is one he should be ashamed of," agreed the "boo-gun." "What shall the punishment be?"
"Put him out!"

"Kill him!"

"Hang him! Hang him, and give him another chance."

"Hang him! Hang him! Hang! Hang! Hang!" The motion was quick-

ly adopted.

This was horrible. But they ruthlessly bandaged his eyes afresh, and he was hanged. Well, he deserved it: he had betraved Lucille. He wished that he had bitten his tongue in two first. What would she think of him, if ever she heard? But what was meant by "list"?

Very sore in body, and very sore but triumphant in mind was Harold, when at last, it appearing that, after all, he had passed the ordeal acceptably, with disguises laid aside and the lights beaming, his brothers crowded about him to give him the grip, and to congratulate him, and bid him welcome. That element of menace and intimidation had vanished; all was serene. The pin of Delta Phi Omicron was fastened upon his breast, and he was privileged to wear it.

But poor little Beulah—and poor Lu-

"You fellows won't let it out, will you?" he appealed, after the banquet, to

"What about, Twenty-three?" de-

manded Punk blandly.

They insisted upon that ridiculous appellation-reminder of his shame. 'About that; twenty-three."

"Why?"

Harold flushed. and sheepishly grinned.

"Aw, you know. I didn't mean to give things away. But you all had me scared. I thought I had to tell."

"Of course you had to tell," agreed Punk, maintaining the farce.

that's all right, Hattie"—which was another name—he added indulgently. "Don't you worry. You didn't give anything away. If a fellow calls there and doesn't hug her instanter, he's expelled from the university in case the faculty finds out."

Punk had a most candid, casual manner of speech. Under the shock, Harold

gulped, and endeavored to rally.
"But say—what is that 'list,' Punk?"

he pleaded.

"Babe's list? Ask her. She won't care. She'll show it."

"Will she, Smithy?" appealed Harold.

"What?"

"Show me her-list?"

"Who? Babe? Sure. For 'she's got you on the list,' Twenty-three," assured Smithy, whose more cumbersome name was Cholmondeley Petherbridge. However, "Smith," whence "Smithy," is much easier.

Oh, heck! Were they slandering Lucille? His Lucille! By gad!

Harold was attiring himself; but Harold was cross. His roommate, who was a Senior Law, and who fondly cherished a resemblance to Webster, and who moved perpetually in a mootcourt, even a future supreme-court atmosphere, placidly surveyed him. "Again, my son?" he commented

"Again, my son?" he commented mournfully. "Then I suppose that this night once more must my innocent right hand know what thy guilty left hand doeth. And what shall the harvest be? I ask you, my lord, and gentlemen of the jury, what shall the harvest be? And what will papa say when he hears?

"My only books Were woman's looks, And folly's all they've taught me."

"Aw, ring off," directed Harold.
"I will, I will," exclaimed his ridiculous roommate dramatically. "To hear is to obey, my lord. I ask not whither thou art going.

"I know not, I ask not, if guilt's in that heart, I but know that I love thee, whatever thou art.

Go. 'Tis nature. But remember:

"Fair tresses man's imperial race ensnare, And beauty draws us with a single hair!" And, rising, he thundered:

"What mighty ills have not been done by woman!
Who was 't betrayed the Capitol? A woman!
Who lost Mark Antony the world? A woman!
Who was the cause—"

"Tell your troubles to a policeman," interrupted Harold rudely; and he stalked out, slamming the door.

Behind him there was silence. His roommate had instantly fallen to study-

ing

A good fellow, that roommate of his, reflected Harold; pity that he should make of himself a recluse and a woman hater, when there was much in life to enjoy. Pity that he would not have a "date" once in a while with a girl like Lucille. For Lucille, despite the aspersions directed her way by the darned fellows at the frat, was a "peach, peachy." The fellows had been trying to annoy him; hadn't they? Well, last night was their night; to-night was his night—his and Lucille's. He wouldn't call her "Babe." That was too common. And the fellows needn't think that they were bothering him. Anyway, what the dickens was that his roommate had recited?

I know not, I ask not, if guilt's in that heart, I but know that I love thee, whatever thou art.

Oh, yes. Pretty, wasn't it? He repeated it, with varying inflections. Supposing she had flirted a little—with some of the fellows. That was all right. He, he—remembering Beulah—was not in the kindergarten, either. He was experienced. Sure! And he didn't object to experience in her. All the more glory that she had chosen him! He didn't believe that there was any "list"—rats!—and she should wear his frat pin, and he would show the fellows. They'd see that he knew a thing or three, and they'd let up. As for the roommate, he was simply ignorant.

Yes, it was grand to be here; and very "comfy." She was so exquisitely, innocently sweet; so—wow! It was a deuced shame for the fellows to talk of



"To sigh, yet feel no pain;
To weep, yet scarce know why."

her the way they did—to plague him. If it hadn't been for her he might have joined the Gamma Gammas; they should remember that, and be grateful! He had been guilty of a terrible offense against her, by "giving her away" when he thought that he must tell the truth—confound the luck!—at the initiation; but she seemed to know that she could not ask him *much* about what had happened; and she needn't suspect what a fool he had been. Poor little girlie!

"Did you ever—kiss a girl before?" she asked shyly. A delicate blush played over her cheek, and she twisted

the ring upon his finger; for they were "comfy."

"Uh huh," he admitted; hastening to add, offhand, "Of course. A fellow doesn't get to be this old without—does he?"

"Often?"

"Kind of." Mentally he multiplied Beulah into a bevy. "Do you care?" he asked anxiously.

"Uh huh." She blushed deeper. How girlish and trustful she was. "Because—."

Bless her innocent heart!

"Have you?" he queried hesitantly.

"Uh huh." She looked up, blushing; and quickly dropped her eyes.

"Been kissed before, I mean?"

She nodded. Tender, embarrassed girlie! But it was the hour for confidences.

"O-often?"

"Kind of. Do you care?"

Thunderation! Of course he did. Why—— Her lips were mighty sweet, anyway; but——

"Shall I show you something? You

won't tell?"
"No."

"Cross your heart?"

He crossed it.

She slipped from him and tripped upstairs. She tripped down, and in again, and resumed her "comfy" position. "Twas" a "comfy" couch, you know; very adaptable.

"See?" she proffered. She had a little memorandum book. "But don't you tell. I've got them all down."

Huh! He stiffened, but she giggled

coaxingly.

"You said you had—and I didn't care. That's just like men; they want to do as they please, but they don't want a girl to do anything. It's such fun, though! I've got you all down; there's twenty-six. You're the last. Do you care?"

He shook his head. "Let's see," he bade.

Her hair brushing his, he read; rather, they read together. Yes, it was the "list." Oh, shucks!

"Aren't men silly?" she purred. "Even Professor Dunn—that old English professor—he tried!"

"Did-he-do-it?"

She laughed and snuggled closer. "Uh huh. Not very good. Right on the ear."

"I don't do it on the ear, do I?" he

reminded jealously.

"No. You're such a nice little freshman, I'd just as lief you—didn't."

"Did he, too?"
"Who?"

"This man Forbes."

"He must have, if he's there. Yes, he did. Why?"

"He's my roommate."
She sniggered delightfully.

"He's number eight, isn't he! That must have been a long time ago. He's —he's a Law, isn't he?"

Yes; but—holy Moses! 'Twas incredible. He felt his ire rising. That roommate of his? That "beefer" about woman? Say!

"You don't care? Really you don't? You're sure?" she coaxed, dimpling and blushing. "It's such fun to keep track."

"Am I last, then?" He looked to see.

"I think so."

"There was another name, though!" he accused, scrutinizing. "Well, I like that!"

She frowned, as if puzzled for a moment. Her face cleared. She giggled.

"Oh! But I rubbed him out," she explained. "I'm not counting him, because he didn't—quite." Again she giggled, roguishly, deliciously. "He—nussed me. Then he was scared." She sighed. "He was a sort of nice little freshman, too; only he was so awkward."

Humph! Number twenty-six, was he, instead of number twenty-three! The fellows had pretty nearly called the turn. They were all there, themselves. He was in good company, if he was a freshman.

"To sigh, yet feel no pain;
To weep, yet scarce know why;
To sport an hour with Beauty's chain,
Then throw it idly by,"

declaimed the roommate thunderously, tying his black string tie—a Websterian affectation—before the glass.

"Ever buss a Miss Brown, here?" demanded Harold, also in the midst of his

ante-breakfast toilet.

"Brown?" rumbled the roommate. "Black. White. Pink. Purple. What's in a name?"

"Lucille Brown. Awfully pretty

"Methinks it has a familiar sound, reminiscent of my salad days," murnured the roommate, accurately aligning his tie ends, that they droop artistically.

"Ever kiss her?"

The roommate whirled on him severely.

"Get out!" he reproved.

"Get out yourself!" retorted Harold pertly. "Your bluff won't work, you old sinner, you! You're down in black and white—""

"And in Brown," interpolated the roommate softly.

"I saw your name myself. You're

number eight."

"'Is my name written there," chanted the roommate irreverently. "Then I cannot tell a lie. I did it with my little lips. Once—maybe. Maybe twice. Maybe thrice. 'Long, long ago; long ago.' And et tu, Brute? That accounts for this harrowsome hand-holding o' nights. Avaunt with your Lucille Brown! Shall she again be robbing me of my brain-repairing sleep? No! Quit it, my mercurial youth; thou canst not stand prosperity. Who are some of the later recruits, after my own short, sweet season? After number ten, let us say?"

"Oh, Professor Dunn, and a lot of the frat boys, and—and myself, and your friend 'Wobblehoof,' the big Law!" recited Harold.

"Aha!" murmured the roommate, critically examining his Websterian tie. "Bless her little heart!

"'Tis woman that seduces all mankind: The Freshman, Prof.—"

"And Senior asinine-d!" completed

Harold promptly.

"Well capped, my lord," agreed the roommate, at last abandoning the glass—much to Harold's relief, who wanted it himself. He seized his hat. "The truth, the truth, and nothing but the truth. Take warning, and girl no more. Thou art young. Pattern after me. Who knows?

"Awake, my soul, stretch every nerve, And press with vigor on; Perhaps one day I, too, shall serve Down there at Washing-ton!"

With this peroration, the roommate, hat on head, books in arm, made exit. "Humph!" communed Harold rebelliously, quizzically, slicking his hair.

Well, she was pretty, anyhow; the witch!



Power

THE king sits on his gilded throne, And deems his power great, Because a higher there is none In all his vast estate.

Yet one there is he can't command, Who sets his will at naught, Defies his edicts boldly and Refuses to be caught.

Who, when the lowlier call, doth greet
Their eyes with treasure-trove.
The which he spreads before their feet
"With Compliments of Love."

JOHN KENDRICK BANGS.



WHEN is a bargain not a bargain?
When is the money saved by
buying at a special sale money
lost? It is a question which many
women in many walks of life can answer very well—concerning the other
woman's purchases. It is very seldom
that a woman's own bargains seem to
her quite so colossally foolish as her
neighbor's seem.

Å short time ago an investigator who was studying the tragedy of the life of the shopgirl in New York met a bargain hunter among the saleswomen who were the subject of her research. Naturally, one would say, a shopgirl earning a wage of some five or six dollars a week would need to be a bargain hunter, a bargain finder, a bargainer of the most skillful type.

This poor young thing undertook to economize on that necessity of the shop-girl's apparel, shirt waists. Ninety-eight cents was the figure which she judged to be the highest which she could afford. In the year she spent some twenty-four dollars on shirt waists as against the eight-and-a-half which girls with no such keen zest for a bargain found to be ample. The ninety-eight-cent shirt waists which the bad bargainer bought "came to pieces"

disconcertingly; they seemed to melt in the wash; they ripped when she reached her arms above her head; they developed holes where the upper-arm sleeves rubbed against the body. It took two dozen of them to enable her to maintain the standard of neatness which her employers set for their saleswomen.

Meantime the girls who bought waists at a dollar and a quarter each were enabled to make the requisite appearance of trimness on four "wash" waists a year. Perhaps the poor little bargainer in question had a particularly unhappy eye for a bargain; perhaps not every ninety-eight-cent waist is as flimsy, as soluble, as altogether expensive and extravagant as her two dozen proved to be. But in her case, at least, the ninety-eight-cent waist was a bargain that cost her about eighteen dollars a year more than she needed to pay—and more than she was able to pay.

Mrs. A, who is a bride of a brief standing, is a bargain hunter. She has a commendable desire to show herself equal to coping in a masterly manner with the high cost of living. The pursuit of bargains in food is her passion. On the days when the department stores advertise their special reductions in canned goods you may find her in



It took two dozen of them to maintain the standard of neatness which her employers set.

the forefront of the fray, elbowing other excited housekeepers away from her six cans of "Yellow Poppy" peas—all department-store canned goods give one "extra good measure" in the matter of poetic names—grabbing defenseless clerks familiarly by the arm to induce them to hearken to her desire for a dozen jars of Yellow Poppy meat relish.

She emerges from the battle somewhat exhausted about eleven o'clock in the forenoon—she has sallied forth immediately after breakfast—and then she sets out to find the place where a friend, noted for her bargain-hunting skill, has found the cheapest olive oil

on the market. Mrs. A spends ten cents in car fare to reach the Italian quarter in which this particular oil has its habitat, and she finds it. It is three cents a can cheaper than that offered by her own firm of grocers. She is, moreover, tempted into the purchase of some dried mushrooms which she thinks will be admirable for seasoning and sauces; and so they would be if a hygienic distrust of their cleanliness did not assail her later-it was a dirty little shop, that Italian grocery; and the dried mushrooms, like most of the other salables, lay exposed to the air of the street and the hands of purchasers, and especially to the hands of the grocer himself.

Mrs. A, in her cooler moments at home, remembers these things and throws out

the dried mushrooms.

She actually, in her zeal to overcome or to mitigate the action of the beef trust, goes to a butcher who advertises that he, too, has a bargain day. On great sheets of manilla paper he has scrawled in big red and blue crayons the attractive prices at which one may buy meat at his shop. Mrs. A, who is somewhat fastidious about her meats. eyes those which bear the tags with disfavor. When she inquires for the cuts which she knows, she finds that they are no cheaper than at her regular dealer's. Even the once cheap "rounds' are dear; it is only odds and ends that are "bargains."

The department store, the little "native" dealer of the various quarters, she continues to patronize. Her shopping consumes a great deal more time than it did in the days of her less strenuous searching for bargains. She does not live adjacent to the Yellow Poppy brand of this and that. She pays car fare as well as time to reach the Yellow Poppy. She pays more car fare and consumes more time to reach the "native" dealers of the various foreign quarters; she also learns that these have the disconcerting practice of obliging their customers to carry home their

purchases.

Mrs. A has been seen plodding home from Bleecker Street, which, truly, boasts cheaper green vegetables in its handcarts than the uptown greengrocers display in their shops, lugging armfuls of paper, said paper containing lettuce at a ridiculously low figure, spinach at a similar price, artichokes also sold for a song. After she has endured the martyrdom of being seen, on foot and in the cars, laden in this plebeian way, it is doubly trying when her cook avers that "there ain't enough of them lettuces sound to make a lettuce soup, ma'am," and "there ain't a saucerful of that spinach fit to eat." As for the artichokes, the same authority declares them scarcely fit for donkeys.

"It's only the yesterday's leavin's you'll be gettin' from them handcarts,

ma'am," she informs her discouraged mistress—and truly. "Why else would the dagos be sellin' them so cheap? Sure when they've got good stuff to sell, they are the quickest to ask a good

price for it!"

Mrs. A, by all these economies and bargain searchings, achieved a notable reduction in her last month's provision accounts. They were four dollars and thirty cents below those of the month before. That she had been obliged to call in her masseuse at two times not stipulated for in the regular routine to smooth away a nervous headache, that she had had the doctor once, had worn out a pair of shoes which she had thought durable enough to last through the winter, and had spent two dollars extra on car fare may perhaps be merely a coincidence. Her husband-Mrs. A is a bride of brief standing, and still confides her domestic troubles to her spouse, and he still accords them a kindly ear-is inclined to place them on the opposite side of the ledger against the notable savings which the housekeeping accounts show.

Mrs. B is a bargain hunter from another sphere. She is a very well-to-do woman, and she has social aspirations which are justified by the ease and grace with which she entertains and is entertained. A few years ago she dressed as well as she could, and her appearance was a source of modest gratification to herself and her husband. Now she dresses better than that. In an evil day she fell upon a genuine bargain-oh, yes, there are genuine bargains in the world. stumbled upon an end-of-the-season sale in one of the exclusive Fifth Avenue milliners' shops, and she bought for twenty dollars a hat which the saleswoman patronizingly informed her, with the half-veiled contempt that such saleswomen feel for the povertystricken individuals who are obliged to buy in the "off" seasons, had cost eighty-five in the early autumn. That Mrs. B had no need of an eighty-fivedollar hat in her wardrobe goes almost without saving.

The lust of such bargains entered her



She haunted the shops where the French things were to be seen in all their allurement.

soul. If there was an "off" season for the Fifth Avenue milliner, there was undoubtedly one for the Fifth Avenue importer of dinner dresses, cloaks, walking suits, blouses, and lingerie. Mrs. B became a haunter of the shops which she had discreetly avoided in the old days. The virus inoculated her—she wanted the "exclusive." the "model gown, madam, a pretty little French thing." The products of her dressmaker no longer satisfied her.

"The only people who really know how to make clothes are the French," she soon found herself saying, and she haunted the shops where the French things were to be seen in all their allurement. "Of course," she told herself and her husband, "it is utterly out of the question for me to buy such things until they are reduced; but these shops have a very rich clientele; they sell out their fall importations before Christmas. One can always be well—even exquisitely—dressed by watching for their bargains."

She quite forgot that their bargains were not bargains to her, that the mere fact that a gown had been reduced from three hundred to one hundred and fifty dollars did not make it a thrifty purchase for a woman who ought not to spend more than seventy-five dollars on her dress. Nor was apparel which

demanded, in undeniable terms, a carriage, economical for a woman who ought to go afoot or in the democratic street car, even though it was being given away at "a hundred and twenty-five, reduced from two hundred and

fifty."

Cab hire alone almost bankrupted Mr. B the season when his wife first discovered the surprising bargains to be had at the expensive shops. Shoes also contributed their quota toward his financial undoing; it is only reasonable to admit that exclusive frocks, and suits, and cloaks require exclusive ties, and boots, and slippers to accompany them; no single pair of utility patent leathers or beaded toes will suffice with a wardrobe from Fifth Avenue.

And then there was the case of Mrs. C, who had the great good luck to drop into an auction room one day, and there to bid in a charming set of chairs which the auctioneer declared, by the graves of his ancestors or something equally sacred, to be genuine Chippendale. At any rate, they were attractive-looking chairs, and Mrs. C obtained them for

the proverbial song.

They required her, however, to refurnish her dining room; it is obviously impossible for a woman with taste enough to appreciate Chippendale chairs to live in a room in which a mission sideboard and table "swear" at said chairs. And when the dining room was done over in mahogany, the wall paper was discovered to make a bad background for it. And after the new wall paper had been hung, of course new curtains had to be bought.

Any one, of course, will admit that a charming Chippendale effect in dining rooms calls for a few treasures in the china line; and, once one embarks upon the collection of china, farewell to

reason!

The present passion of Mrs. C, which her friends deplore and which is bringing her husband's hair to a premature gray—a passion for Georgian silver—is, by the easiest, most natural, most inevitable, steps in the world, an evolution from her first great bargain—six dining-room chairs, Chippendale, picked up for a song!

When is a bargain not a bargain?

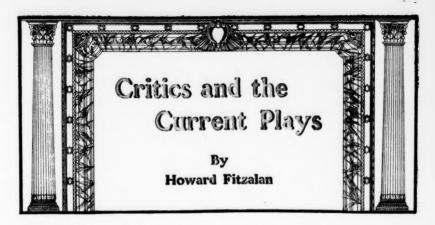
Sometimes, obviously!



The Bluebird

A LTHOUGH so dark, last night unto my window ledge there came,
A tiny bird—and is there one so young, or old, as not to know its name?
It came, and nestled down as though content to stay,
But ah, how well I knew, that when the day
Appeared this tiny thing would spread its soft blue wings and go,
Unheeding of my cry: I love you—need you so.

MARTIN J. POST.



A CHARMING correspondent writes me thus:

Once you were a good young author; now you are a bad old critic. Leave criticism to those who cannot create and give us stories.

My dear lady, it is because most authors are following your advice that we find dramatic criticism in such a bad way. A man cannot really criticize until he has created. He must realize how difficult it is to crowd the events of a lifetime into a dramatic sequence which measures just one hour and a half of actual playing before he lets his "wit" play upon what he calls artificial. Some consummate artists conceal their machinery utterly, but if it be art it is always there.

For instance, take realism—so-called. If you wished a pictorial visualization of yourself would you go to an Eighth Avenue photographic artist, or to James McNeill Whistler—if he were living—for a portrait? Yet the Eighth Avenue photographer would be the most "realistic," if the word is to be taken at its face value. Ibsen was a realist, but he was also a poet. Eugene Walter is just a realist, and "The Easiest Way" is a great "realistic" play. But it is not a great play.

The average critic fails to divide the drama synthetically. Let us say he ad-

mires the Walter school of the drama. That, somehow, seems to prevent him from realizing that "The Upstart," for instance, was a clever fantastic comedy.

instance, was a clever fantastic comedy.
"It is not real." "It is nonsense." "It is not life." "It is absurd."

It was *meant* to be absurd. So was "Alice in Wonderland." The fact that the admirers of that dullest of classics, "Daniel Deronda," which was popular about the time "Alice" was published, did not like the "Alice kind of a book" has nothing to do with its literary value. The public does not really desire to know what the critic *likes*. It wishes to be informed: First, What *kind* of a book or play is this new one? Second, *Explain* what kind it is. And, Third, Is it a *good* one of that *kind?*

This is a fact that the ordinary critic—not being a creator—utterly ignores. He either likes or dislikes the book or play; and, if he dislikes it, he allows himself to write wittily(?) or ponderously concerning it.

I accompanied a critic to a play termed "immoral." He said to me: "This play is very bright and clever, but I do not approve of it. If I say it is bright and clever, people will go to see it, and it will be a dangerous influence in the community. Therefore, I will say it is depressing, dull, a noisome miasma of words."

And he kept his word. I have pre-

served the criticism to this day as a horrible example of critical arrogance. This man—a former actor and in no sense a literary man—makes or mars a production so far as perhaps one hundred

thousand people are concerned.

Creators, acting as critics, never make this mistake. Oscar Wilde praised the works of Edna Lyall as perfect examples of their kind. Bernard Shaw has written favorably of Arthur Conan Doyle. Arnold Bennett praises books and plays that, personally, bore him to tears. The same may be said of Gilbert K. Chesterton.

But men who cannot create imagine that they have a right to tell the public just what *kind* of literary creation they

should like.

Two excellent examples of the sort of thing I mean occurred last December, when Billie Burke appeared in "Suzanne" and Mr. Henry Arthur Jones' new play, "We Can't Be As Bad As All That," went on at the Nazimova.

Miss Burke is a "bread-and-butter miss." "Suzanne" is a naïve little play of bourgeois life. It tells of the efforts of a little Belgian girl, educated a bit above her station, to make those about her happy. She cures her parents of quarreling over trifles, persuades a man, to whom her parents have engaged her, to marry the girl he really loves, even though she be below him in the social scale; and, by a lovable use of polite blackmail, forces the father of that man to allow the mésalliance (?). Incidentally, Suzanne wins a husband, a Parisian young gentleman, who, pre-sumably, takes her into a section of society which she is more fitted to adorn than the one in which she was horn.

The authors of this piece have aimed at nothing save reproducing with fidelity and some humor a certain kind of life. They succeed admirably. The evening passes pleasantly, and one rather likes the fluffy Miss Billie. The company, without a single exception, is excellent.

Why, therefore, this chorus of critical disapprobation? Merely because the critics decide they do not like that

kind of play. There is a certain naïve insolence in this.

"WE CAN'T BE AS BAD AS ALL THAT."

Down at the Nazimova they whiled away the last days of the old year with this bit of Jones-ism, the title evidently expressing the idea the critic had of what English society would say when they found themselves so sharply brought to book. Do you like one of those plays that has a real, sure-enough plot about a lady who used to be bad, but isn't bad any more, and over whose head hangs a Damoclean sword in the shape of a secret which will prevent her, should it be discovered, from marrying the man she really loves? Isn't it rather entertaining when the villain steals a valuable necklace to keep from being posted as a defaulter, and, when at the height of his persecution of "the lady who used to be bad," is confronted with his crime, and the man the lady loves forgives everything, and everybody is

happy?
Not the highest form of dramaturgy, you say? Smacks of old Eugene Scribe's machine, does it? Ah, but when it serves to bring to your attention some well-drawn and amusing characters; when it offers opportunities for some really excellent acting; and you aren't in the slightest bit bored, but rather interested to see if the puzzle works out the way you think, isn't it

worth while?

Incidentally, both of these pieces had something which is often sadly lacking nowadays, and which, for the want of a more definite word, we call "atmosphere." Lord Carnforth's drawing-room looked like the kind of a drawing-room a peer of the realm would actually have in his country place, and the actors, with the exception of a certain over-noticeable personality exploited under the character name of "Fulkes Bissett"—the sort of people one might actually meet there; particularly the charming Miss Kaelred and Mrs. Sam Sothern. And the gowns! But this is no sartorial disquisition.

"THE FOOLISH VIRGIN."

A good many of the critical gentry saw "The Foolish Virgin" in Paris. Now they clamor loudly: "Why is it a failure here?" I find no difficulty in answering the question. Although the play was well constructed, had capable characterization, and entertaining, if somewhat unsound, philosophy, it was evidently produced during the absence of Mr. Charles Frohman. Or, perhaps, that astute gentleman, realizing he had made a mistake in allotting the central character to Mrs. Patrick Campbell, determined to let the production go its own way and get itself over.

At all events, it was cold, hard, and absolutely without atmosphere. One was reminded of a stock-company production. Stage management seemed to be absolutely absent; people came on, repeated their lines in a lifeless sort of way, and one almost saw them return to their dressing rooms and pick up their

unfinished cigarettes.

It was a pity, but it was just as well. Talent, misdirected, is worse than mediocrity, and no one could, by any stretch of imagination, see in Mrs. Patrick Campbell—the sinuous, beautiful voluptuary of the past-the devotedalmost slavishly devoted-wife of the unappreciative Amaury. Desert her for a colorless slip of a girl from school, would he? And she would run after him and beg him to come back? And when he refused and told her his love for her was dead, would she passionately exclaim that her arms were always stretched wide to receive him no matter how many years had to pass before he tired of the anæmic ingénue?

Mrs. Pat? Not much! This is more like it:

"I wouldn't care so much if I could admire your choice. But when I think that I have spent all these years with a man so lacking in artistic appreciation, I could almost wish to meet the Fool Killer. It's a good thing this happened before I lost my beauty. When shall I send my lawyer around to arrange about the alimony?"

So we ask you, Mr. Frohman, if you

love us who are so largely dependent upon you for our foreign plays: "Please don't make a mistake like this again, because, honestly, we should have liked to see 'The Foolish Virgin' run three or four months—as Monsieur Bataille's part of it certainly deserved to do."

"POMANDER WALK."

Every now and then an author produces so charming a comedy that a manager stops him in the middle of the first act and calls for contracts. He then hies him forth each night to all the current productions, seeking actors and actresses who will absolutely fit the parts in it. He impresses the producer with dreadful threats of what will happen to him if he spares himself one iota of pains in finding the identical thimble for the identical thumb. "Let us be worthy of the piece." says he.

worthy of the piece," says he.
Such a comedy is "Pomander Walk,"
by Louis N. Parker, chiefly known,
heretofore, as the author of "Rose-

mary."

It was in 1805 that some delightful architect planned five small brick houses which he arranged in a crescent that was to overlook the Thames. were built by a contractor as a whimsical conceit, and immediately were leased to characters who were afterward found by Dickens, Thackeray, and maybe Jane Austen, who made much of them. There was an old sea dog, Sir Peter, an erstwhile admiral in his majesty's navy, who, upon moving in, ran up a Union Jack, mounted a brass cannon, brought with him a limping son of a sea cook out of a Stevenson story, and was immediately wooed in Shavian fashion by the widow of an alderman, an earlier Ann Whitfield. There was an ex-butler who had married a cook, and who, after hyphenating the culinary and major-domo-ian acquired much importance through relating the quips and jests of men of fashion, never mentioning the relationship he had held with these gentlemen, but leaving the other residents of Pomander Walk to imagine that he, Brooke-Hoskyn, was their peer. There

was also a maiden lady who possessed a profane parrot bequeathed to her by a deceased military man to whom she had once been engaged. There were many others, all identified by idiosyncrasies, except a lady with a French

name, and her daughter.

The lady had loved a certain young lord, whose father had torn him ruthlessly from her. The lord had married where his heart had not dictated, and his heiress wife had given him a son. By chance the son meets the daughter of his father's old love—who has also half healed her hurts by marriage with one of fortune—and this tale of "lavender and old lace" is held together by the love story of these youngsters, who finally lead their elders into the paths of happiness.

One imagines an author loving his characters in such a story as this, and inspiring that same love in its stagers, portrayers, and audiences. "Pomander Walk" is as mellow and as plenteous with good cheer as a page from Dickens. It charms back days that are regrettably past for a generation that generally considers itself a hundred years progressed. Said one man at the opening night, whose rubicund face and spectacles one expects to

see at such gatherings:

"If this isn't a success the public doesn't deserve to get good things."

One finds no flaws in "Pomander Walk," nor does any one connected with the production surpass any other. The work of the players is on an even level of excellence. The play itself is a perfectly carved cameo.

"DADDY DUFARD."

What "goes for" the players in this last-mentioned production is generally to be said about any productions in which the Lieblers—by which is meant our urbane friend, George C. Tyler—are interested; and it is the best that can be said about "Daddy Dufard," which is a vehicle for Albert Chevalier rather than a play. What it was when Lechmore Worrall first wrote it, none knows; but as written "by Lochmere

Worrall and Albert Chevalier," the entertaining Albert is seldom absent from the center of the stage; and, when not occupied in presenting the character of the venerable French actor about whom this little comedy of life behind the scenes revolves, comes forward in his coster songs, as in days of yore, and is

applauded vastly,

Daddy is unappreciated as an actor in England, but he determines that his daughter shall not share his misfortune, and, therefore, plans cunningly, and, in my opinion, somewhat unreally, to make a "star" of her. The story is rather attenuated for an evening's entertainment, and, while Chevalier is as necessary as salt is with dinner, one does not take that useful mineral with dessert, ices, and coffee. For little Violet Heming, Chevalier's sixteen-year-old "leading woman," the town criers are busily and justly predicting an Edith Taliaferro future.

"MARY MAGDALEN."

Another Liebler production, this masterpiece of Maeterlinck's, and telling the story of a woman who washed with fine oil the feet of the Master and dried them with her silken hair. One appreciates the absence of any attempt to portray One, who, even if you be agnostic or unbeliever, you must believe stood for a miracle among men by His transcending beauty of character. In a Roman garden in Bethany, aristocratic auditors hear the Sermon on the Mount a senator in the purple, a philosopher, a centurion, and the Magdalen. Garbed in the products of the most skillful weavers and broiderers, laved each day in perfumed waters, but lately dining upon epicurean dainties, and steeped in the Pierian spring of earthly wisdom, these aristocrats still find a certain lack in their lives.

As the ragged, the lame, the halt, and the blind—the veriest scum of Galilee, even of Judea—crowd through the carefully kept gardens to drink in the words of Him who speaks in the garden of Simon the Leper, Mary Magdalen forgets that she has but lately reviled these

"wretches" and their Leader. As one who dreams, she passes down the steps and lifts the latch of the arbor's gate. Her Roman friends cry out for her to halt; the sight of her will inflame the But, hearing only the Voice, she goes on into the midst of the diseased and the miserable. They fall upon her, bidding her from their presence. Some tear her gorgeous clothes; all pursue her. Cudgels, short swords, and other weapons are raised by the few; stones are gathered from the garden by the many, and hands fly back as though to hurl them when the Voice is heard from the garden of Simon the Leper:

"If there be one among you without sin, let him cast the first stone!"

Olga Nethersole plays the title rôle. One can imagine the difficulties that beset its portrayal. There has been much adverse criticism of her work. For myself, so enthralled was I by the magic of the Belgian poet and of his subject, I can only say I left the New Theater inspired by feelings of the deepest reverence.

"DRIFTING."

Succeeding Preston Gibson's play at the Nazimova Theater is that one entitled "We Can't Be As Bad As All That," which, on a preceding page, I have endeavored to give the attention a new play by Henry Arthur Jones deserves. My only excuse for mentioning it again is to suggest that it is a very good catch phrase for Preston Gibson to use to the critics who so severely mauled "Drifting." This young clubman sowed the wind last season when he permitted his admiration for the dramatic works of Oscar Wilde to go to the extent of writing about characters who quoted the brilliant Irishman's epigrams!

Mr. Gibson is not dull. He does not know how to write a play, but, also, he does not know how to bore an audience. He is amusing even in his indiscreet enthusiasms and solecisms. He simply cannot resist the desire to make an epigram. Now, there are certain things that one does not express epi-

grammatically. If I ask Central to connect me with a telephone subscriber in the Bronx, I want a number, not an epigram. Similarly, when I go to buy a book, I prefer to read condensations of wit between the covers; I am content that the salesmen hand me the volume.

Mr. Gibson calls this latest thing of his a "comedy"; if he had called it a "dramaturgic budget" he would have been nearer the mark. It is comedy, comedy-drama, farce, a race-suicide tract, and melodrama. In his efforts not to be dull, Mr. Gibson has produced a wild mass of dialogue which is unsuitable for presentation before folk who have paid for a reasonable amount of amusement of specified type. He has called it a "comedy," and his audience has paid to see two dollars' worth of "comedy." If they had desired a theatrical pousse-café, "Drifting" would have been all that could be desired.

Now, truthfully, if our young friend was not possessed of the wherewithal to stage productions and rent theaters, I really believe he might some day write a clever play. But, if he is under the impression that he is writing stuff that is "over the heads" of the public, he is maliciously deceiving himself.

The very fact that certain incidents in his piece show a strong resemblance to other plays already produced, should incidentally be a warning to Mr. Gibson not to repeat his "Turning Point" indiscretion. I should suggest to him that he realize fully his inability, at present, to produce anything but invertebrate dramatic matter; that he study the art of playwriting most carefully; and produce no more of his work before metropolitan audiences until some unflattering and fully qualified critic tells him he has really written a play.

"THE SPRING MAID."

Every now and then, quite unheralded by trumpets and foreign press notices, a new operetta captures the hearts of the folk who ever yearn for something new, and who are apt to forget the old things and think them novel if they are left long enough without them. "The

Spring Maid" is the sort of piece you can fancy being written for Alice Nielsen. One of the men who wrote "The Dollar Princess" invented the story, with the assistance of one of the stories in the book by the famous Brothers Grimm; and, out of that golden world of song across the water, a man named Heinrich Reinhardt springs, fully clad and unfearing, into the arena to compete with the Leo Falls, the Franz Lehars, et al. Among other Christmas gifts, he gave to New Yorkers a waltz called "Day Dreams," for which people are apt to stop whistling "Ev'ry Little Movement" from that other musical success just up the street from the Liberty.

It was at the latter theater, and on Christmas Day, that Christie MacDon-

ald came into her own.

It needed just such a piece as this to establish Christie as a leading luminary. A featured favorite she has always been, but this time her name surmounts that of the attraction, instead of succeeding it. Her diminutive demureness is well suited to the picture-book prettiness of everything connected with this dainty little operetta, which tells the tale of a princess who loved a prince who would woo only maids of low degree. For this more modern Cophetua, she dons the cap and apron of a "spring maid," one who ladles forth the health-giving Carlsbad waters for those who come to drink them.

Many folk become entangled in the story. A comic policeman dons disguises, an elderly potentate emulates him, and becomes entangled in the skirts of a spinster aunt, in which he has arrayed himself, a duel is fought between two fair young ladies, and the whole affair ends in a glorious pageant in which white rabbits, fairy-tale huntsmen who cut terpsichorean capers, dancing elfs, and nobles in Maxfield Parrish uniforms, all assist in making up a resplendent whole.

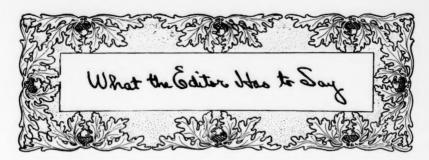
The management is as new as are the star and the composer. The chorus girls even are new; they have neither the blond-wigged ancientness of pony ballets nor the rather faded hauteur of the rapidly passing show girl. Indeed, to those who went to the opening performance, the affair was like a Drury Lane pantomime, for the children and every one agreed that, if they had been able to choose a theatrical Christmas present for old Father Knick, they could not have done better than give him "The Spring Maid," who, nobody doubts, will be a spring maid in all verity, and, perhaps, even a summer girl. It will be long before the Liberty Theater need look for another attraction.

SOME REVIVALS.

One really cannot refrain from remarking on the success of Mr. William Gillette's revivals; a review of December's plays would be incomplete without it; for, so great was that success, that after spending a month at the Empire. he took his company and "Secret Service," "Too Much Johnson," and all the other plays through which he originally gained fame as author and actor, to begin the New Year at the Criterion, and make way for another revival at the Empire-Pinero's "Trelawny of the Wells," with that charming matron and excellent actress, Ethel Barrymore, in the leading rôle. While over at the Broadway Theater, in order to prepare theatergoers for "The Squaw Man's" sequel, "The Silent Call," "The Squaw Man" itself was revived on New Year's day, but this time Dustin Farnum, not William Faversham, played the leading rôle.

And that meant the Sothern-Marlowe Shakesperian season ended with many regrets on the part of those who appreciate intelligent portrayal of the ever-new poet dramatist's great achievements.





ITH every mail almost, letters come to us asking us what kind we of stories want Of course, the best way to SMITH'S. get an idea of what we want is to study the magazine itself from number to number. It is impossible to realize completely any ideal, and we suppose that no number of the magazine has had everything in the way of fiction we would like to see in it. At the same time, however, inasmuch as we have the whole field of fiction writers to choose from, and as each number represents a very small selection from thousands of manuscripts, the fiction that we publish may be regarded as at least an approximation of what we consider the most interesting, the most real, and the most vital. A few words, however, may be helpful to those who think they have it in them to write stories, and at the same time may answer at once a great many questions.

BEFORE you attempt to write a story, find out if you really have a story to tell. Try it on some of your friends. Tell it as something that has actually happened. If they are interested, it may be worth while to go ahead and write it. If they get bored, and don't follow you with interest, don't write it. It won't do. If you write your story, make it reflect in some measure the conditions and life about you. If you think of sending it to us, remember that it ought to be a story of to-day and of America; it ought to be a story that will make some especial

appeal to the normal American woman, and it ought to be a story with something of cheerfulness and uplift in its message. There are only a very few who can really tell a good story. It has been said that every one has at least one good story he or she is capable of writing, but we doubt it. You may have the experience, the wisdom, the command of language of a Macaulay, but if you have not that sort of magical discernment that sees beauty, and romance, and poetry under the dull exterior of the ordinary things of everyday life, you can't write good stories. There are good stories in every hamlet. in every farmhouse, in every country lane and city street, if we could only see them. If you send us a story that is like the great majority we receive, we will keep it a very short while, and return it with our thanks. If we can see any possibilities in it or in you in regard to future work, we will keep the story a little longer, and write you about it. If you happen to be the one person out of a hundred, or ten thousand-we don't know what the mathematical proportion is, but we think it is more nearly the latter-who can show us the stirring and interesting quality of the life about us, we will send you a check. And no more about story writing for the present.

YOU have the first installment of the new Williamson serial in the number of the magazine now in your hands. It cannot be said for every serial story, or even for the majority of them, that the interest grows as the story progresses. But this is one of the rare kind that we are glad to get. It gets better with each installment. The next installment will find the scene shifted to Algiers, and will interest you even more than what you have already read. It will be completed in three numbers of the magazine.

T WO stories that we announced for the present number of the magazine were crowded out. We wanted and intended to have them in this number, but there wasn't room for them. They are "The Poet and Peggy," by Margaret Belle Houston, and "In the Matter of Individuality," by Margaret Busbee Shipp. They will appear in the May SMITH's.

THE complete novel in the next number of SMITH's is "For the Good of the Service," by Quentin M. Drake. It is a story of army life; there is a splendid love story in it, and at the same time it is thrilling and exciting. There are incident and movement in it from beginning to end, and an atmosphere that any woman who has ever lived at an army post will recognize at once. None of Mr. Drake's work has heretofore appeared in SMITH's, but it is likely that you will hear more from him in the future.

DID you ever travel in Europe? If you haven't, you have surely had the sometimes doubtful pleasure of listening to the impressions of foreign parts gathered by your friends on their travels. We all know it to be true that no matter how many people visit a town, each will bring back a different impression. The things that loom important to some are trivial to others; the things that interest the girl bore the grown woman; each has an individual viewpoint, and each sees something put there for himself alone. There is a de-

lightful little monologue by Marie Manning in the next number of SMITH'S. It is called "Points on Europe," and in it we find that continent viewed from an entirely new angle. We wonder if you have ever met any one like the woman in this monologue?

HERE are a number of unusually good short stories in the next number of the magazine. Comparisons are not always safe or fair, and we don't think we can honestly pick out any one story and say it is better than any other. But if we were to attempt such a thing, we would be inclined to mention first Anne O'Hagan's story called "The Greater Love." It is a story of a girl with particularly high and almost impractical ideals and of a man who did not expect quite so much of himself or of any one else. We want to especially call your attention to it, for we know that you will enjoy reading it, and enjoy remembering it also for a long time after.

THEN there is another splendid story, "Ambition—Made of Sterner Stuff," by Virginia Middleton, funny stories by Edwin L. Sabin, Kate Whiting Patch, and Holman F. Day. There is an interesting little sketch, "The Passing of the Bored Lady," by Hildegarde Lavender, and another good story by Edith Summers Updegraff.

THE two departments in the present issue, "The Well-dressed Woman," conducted by Anne Rittenhouse, and the beauty department, conducted by Doctor Whitney, will be better, and more interesting, and more helpful than ever next month. To these will be added the department of dramatic criticism, in which Howard Fitzalan will give some adequate impressions of the plays now showing in New York.

Improving the Nose, Chin, and Ears

By Dr. Lillian Whitney

IT is a human trait to feel dissatisfaction at the features nature has given us; if a woman, we are especially aggrieved that the nose is anything but purely Grecian in type—if a man, it should have been Romanesque! We do not stop to think how laughable any other shape would appear in conjunction with our features and the general outline and form of the head and face.

What we really should feel concern over is the proper development of the nose along lines of health and beauty, for the nose reflects one's condition as perhaps no other part of the face does. It is the outward and visible sign that the inner mechanism is in good working order; and conversely, if the nose is in an unhealthy state, every organ in the body, as well as every feature of the face, is unpleasantly affected. A cold in the head, for instance, involves not only the nose, but the eyes, mouth, ears, etc. Should a cold become chronic, the membrane lining the nose is permanently swollen and the glands are enlarged, making proper breathing impossibleconsequently mouth breathing is established. The nose degenerates from disuse into a more or less unsightly, undeveloped structure; the mouth hangs open to a greater or less extent, and the chin lacks the firm contour which is essential to beauty.

The nose is, in truth, the real breathing apparatus; it is supplied with a special membrane for warming, moistening, and filtering the air before it reaches the throat and lungs. Can you see the importance of keeping it in good condition? Aside from the hayoc cre-



Place the forefinger of each hand at the root of

ated by cold, bacteria-laden air rushing directly into the throat, it also affects the hearing by disturbing the remarkable equilibrium established in the ear passage by an equable temperature maintained there when all these parts are in good health.

Just as we are dependent upon each other for comfort and happiness, so is everything in nature interdependent. Beauty is obviously impossible without form, and form cannot be attained without health. So it behooves those who have chronic nasal catarrhs and the like, to seek relief and give the outer structure of the nose an opportunity to develop. The stunted growth and thin nostrils we frequently meet in adults are, in nine cases out of ten, due to early habits of mouth breathing and catarrhal conditions.

It goes without saying that during the formative age every precaution should be taken to prevent this. There is a little device on the market for insertion inside the nose; it expands the nasal passages, and enables one to breathe freely. It is a most valuable aid to those who have any structural defect of the nose, or who suffer with catarrh. I will add a formula for

NASAL CATARRII.

Menthol 5	grains
Thymol5	
Camphor5	
Liquid vaseline1	ounce

Mix. This should be warmed before using it in a spray, first cleansing the nostrils with an antiseptic wash. Any good alkaline wash will answer, such as a warm salt solution, to which a pinch of borax is added.

I will not touch upon the correction

of nasal deformities, for this would take us into the domain of surgery, but there are many unsightly minor defects that can easily be corrected at home with a little patience.

Now to deviate a moment-t h e kind and the method of using one's handkerchief seem almost too trifling to mention, but they are important. I have seen men, women, and children twist and distort the nose most absurdly when applying the handkerchief, and

I know that the skin is coarsened, and often bruised, with thick, cotton materials it is deemed economy to use. A soft, spotless handkerchief not only indicates refinement, but expresses intelligence. The use of a delicate scent adds to its value, as perfumes possess marked antiseptic properties.

In regard to minor defects of the nose, a noticeably broad base is objectionable to most women. Nose clips have been devised that aid in attaining shapeliness; they should be only accessory means, however, since nothing

exceeds well-directed massage to mold the soft structure of the nose into greater comeliness.

With the forefinger of each hand at the root of the nose, use a gentle but firm rotary movement, gradually covering the soft tissue; this rids it of an excess of fat, stimulates the circulation and the glands into greater activity, and in every way promotes its health and appearance. The nose clip must be selected with care as to its fit, otherwise it will do harm instead of good.

There is a condition of the nose. which may extend to the cheeks. called rosacea. "red nose." In the very beginning of this affection, when merely the tip of the nose is red, it is the cause of much annovance, and as it progresses, involving more surface and becoming deeper, it creates positive wretchedness. as it is so unsightly it makes one conspicuous.

The redness is due to engorgement of the blood vessels; the sebaceous glands are usually over-

are usually overactive, and so an excessive oiliness is added to the redness. In women this stage is rarely exceeded; in men, however, it may go on and assume flaming proportions. This affection is attributed to indiscretions in diet—I regret to say that its unfortunate possessors are frequently unjustly blamed for habits of eating and drinking of which they are entirely innocent—to gouty and rheumatic conditions; and the injudicious use of poor cosmetics may give rise to it.

All rich foods must be tabooed; the



An improvised chin belt of surgeon's adhesive plaster.

parts should frequently be bathed with hot water, and, if oily, a soothing lotion applied.

SOOTHING LOTION FOR RED, OILY NOSE.

Acetate of lead....10 grains Acetate of zinc....10 grains Rose water.....4 ounces Daub on with medicated cotton.

For enlarged pores with redness, the following ointment will prove valuable:

Tannic acid10 grains
Sublimed sulphur, ½ dram
Carbonate of zinc. 1 dram
White vaseline ... 1 ounce Mix

A dusting powder for a red, oily nose may be preferred. Here is one:

This can be used alone or dusted on the nose after the ointment has been applied.

In uncomplicated, mild conditions of enlarged pores, with occasional redness and oiliness, an astringent lotion may prove sufficiently efficacious to overcome the trouble.

AN ASTRINGENT LOTION FOR ENLARGED PORES.

Juice of cucumber.. 4 drams
Tincture of benzoin. 1 ounce
Cologne 4 drams
Elderflower water.. 16 ounces

Combine the juice of cucumber with the cologne, add the elderflower water, and lastly the benzoin drop by drop. Apply this to the parts several times each day with absorbent cotton.

The blood vessels at the root of the nose become quite prominent, and constitute unsightly blemishes. Witch-hazel is said to have a reducing effect upon them. The fluid extract may be applied copiously, as it is absolutely harmless. A local vapor bath of the nose, followed by a tiny mask of medicated cotton saturated with witch-hazel and worn for hours when alone, is excellent treatment.

Electrolysis might be resorted to in severe cases,



Anoint the ear with oils.

To those who love beauty of form. nothing about the human face is more regrettable than a double chin, because it is so obviously the result of carelessness and sluggish habits. Only a day or two ago I observed a woman with a triple chin; a young, and in other respects, a comely woman at that! It was apparent that this gross condition had been deliberately cultivated by the manner in which she forced her chin downward and backward in an unpleasant facial gesture to which she was ad-Many women have a stupid habit of emphasizing a comment by settling the lower face into rigid lines; this gives it a heaviness that in course of time becomes fixed, and an excess of tissue is inevitable.

All habits that have originated the trouble must be corrected, and nothing seems so hopeless as overcoming a fixed habit. The best way to do this is to place one's mind upon the matter for a stipulated length of time whenever the opportunity is afforded, and this is easily done when doing other things; for instance, had the woman to whom I alluded a moment ago had this thought in mind, she would have elevated her

chin instead of depressing it, and during the entire time she was seated doing nothing else, she could have concentrated upon this thought, in time she would have established the counter habit of holding her head aloft instead of

sinking it into her breast.

Vigorous massage to break up the superabundant tissue, the alternate application of hot and cold, the latter in the form of ice rubbed into the parts, is extremely efficacious. Many specialists recommend the chin belt; it is supporting when the tissues are relaxed, and is also a constant reminder that the chin must be carried forward. When there is an excess of fat, a rubber bandage is helpful in that it induces heat and perspiration, and so has a reducing effect. Equally good and much simpler, is a strip of surgeon's adhesive plaster, which should be drawn around the chin tightly, to get the full benefit of heat pressure. By folding a soft cloth under · the chin first, the unpleasant effect of the plaster will be felt only at the two points of attachment.

Chin devices possess another advantage in that they can be adjusted over the ears, and so help to train them close to the head, should they be of the "winged" variety. A woman can quite successfully disguise poorly formed ears by her mode of hairdressing. It is amazing how neglectful otherwise careful women are as to the cosmetic value of a pretty ear. The face and neck are cleaned, and powdered, and perfumed, while the ear is a red, shining proclaimer of ignorance as to true beauty

values.

To reduce the color of ears use several times daily a simple lotion of

> Powdered borax I dram Tincture of benzoin... 2 ounces Rose water 8 ounces

Pretty ears are a captivating feature, and, in summing up an attractive ensemble, are never overlooked by those who know, or who have a discriminating sense in matters beautiful. The ears, therefore, demand the same thought and time expended upon them as does the complexion, the teeth, or any other part of the body. Clean them with cleansing creams, anoint them with oils to keep them well nourished, and your reward will be ears as pink as a seashell and velvety as a rose petal.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

B. M. C.—Do not allow powder to remain on your face all night. Remove it with a greaseless cream.

A toilet water is far better to use while traveling than soap and water.

Salt is an excellent tonic for the skin. Hard water can be softened with borax and toilet ammonia.

M. H.—A celebrated French formula for the development of the form, and particularly of the bust, is known as Vaucaire Tonic:

"Montreal."—The electric needle is the surest means of destroying superfluous hair. A reliable depilatory is:

Orpiment (A compound of arsenic)... I part Starch 10 parts Quicklime 10 parts

Have this put up by a reliable chemist. As you wish to use it, make a little paste by mixing a small quantity of the powder with water; spread this over the parts you want to denude of hair and allow it to dry on, when it must be removed at once with a dull knife; the hairs come away with the paste. If the skin is inflamed, bathe it with hot water and apply cold cream.

Dr. Whitney will be glad to answer, free of charge, all reasonable questions relating to beauty and health. Private replies will be sent to those enclosing a self-addressed stamped envelope. Address: Beauty Department, Smith's Magazine, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York.



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These Pictures are Proo

These two photographs tell a story that cannot be denied. They are of Edna Guyton, daughter of Mr. L. E. Guyton, Walnut Springs, Texas, Edna was born with club feet. The left picture shows exactly how her feetlooked when she came to us July 12, 1910. The other was made shortly after she left the Sanitarium, September 23, 1910.

Mr. Guyton had tried plaster paris and other methods for treatment before he brought the girl to us. Write him and have him tell you of his experience in the treatment of his girl's affliction. The



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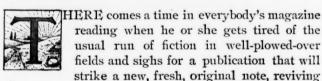
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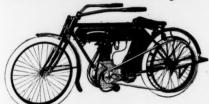
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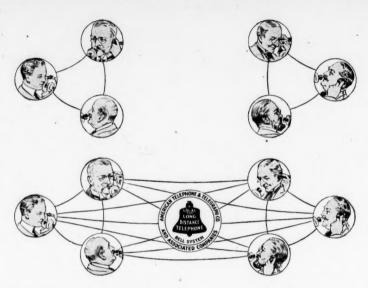
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Union Increases Use



When two groups of telephone subscribers are joined together the usefulness of each telephone is increased.

Take the simplest case — two groups, each with three subscribers. As separate groups there are possible only six combinations—only six lines of communication. Unite these same two groups, and instead of only six, there will be fifteen lines of communication.

No matter how the groups are located or how they are connected by exchanges, combination increases the usefulness of each telephone, it multiplies traffic, it expands trade.

The increase is in accordance with the mathematical rule. If two groups of a thousand each are united, there will be a million more lines of communication.

No one subscriber can use all of these increased possibilities, but each subscriber uses some of them.

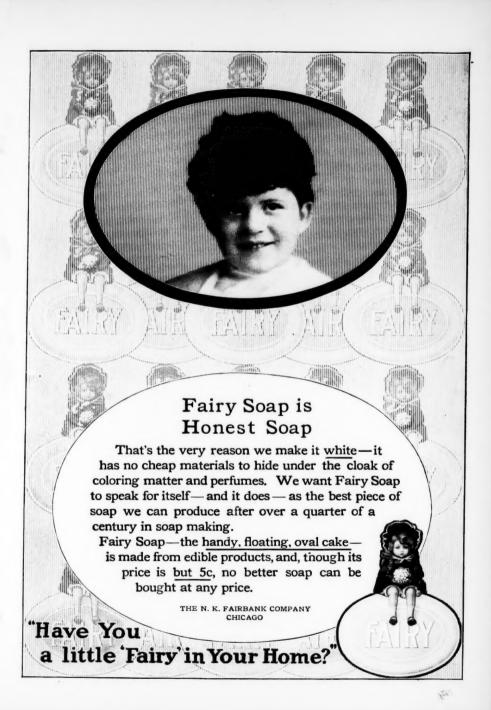
Many groups of telephone subscribers have been united in the Bell System to increase the usefulness of each telephone, and meet the public demand for universal service.

AMERICAN TELEPHONE AND TELEGRAPH COMPANY AND ASSOCIATED COMPANIES

One Policy

One System

Universal Service





BUILD YOUR BODY RIGHT
on Grape-Nuts
"THERE'S A REASON"